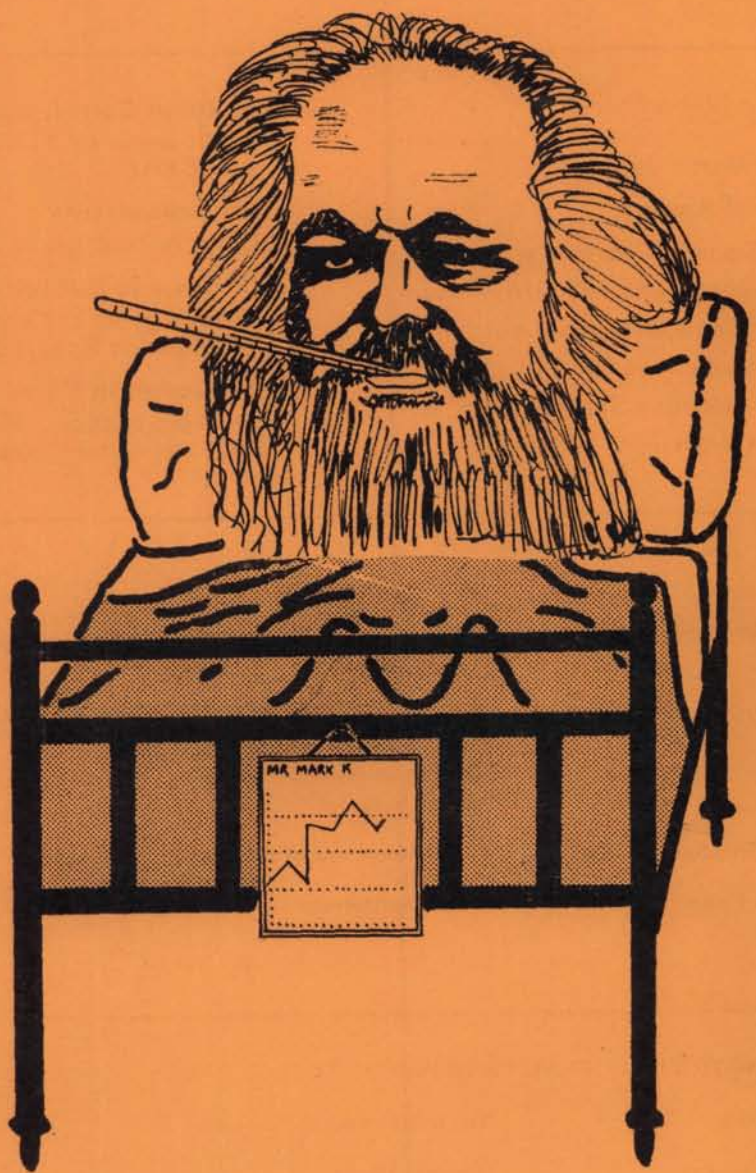
Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party July 1978 35 pence



LOUIS ALTHUSSER
THE CRISIS OF MARXISM

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Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

Volume 22, Number 7

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Subscription Rates
£4.50 per annum UK and Eire
£5.25 per annum Abroad

CONTENTS

	Editorial Comments	201
Gideon Ben-Tovim	The Struggle Against Racism: Theoretical and Strategic Perspectives	203
Louis Althusser	The Crisis of Marxism	215
Sam Aaronovitch	Eurocommunism: a discussion of Carrillo's "Eurocommunism and the State"	222
Frankie Rickford	The Development of the Women's Movement	229
Giuliano Procacci	Orlov and Détente	235

Cover Designed by David Triesman

SOME ARTICLES PLANNED FOR FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Dougie Bain	The Referendum in Scotland
Colin Chambers	Political Theatre
Eric Hobsbawm	100 Years of Working-Class Development
Monty Johnstone	The Evolution of Communist Party Strategy

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Editorial Comments

THE RECESSION AND THE BONN SUMMIT

At each of the summit meetings following the onset of the capitalist economic recession in 1974—Rambouillet 1975, Puerto Rico 1976, London 1977—optimistic declarations have been made that the world economy was about to recover the buoyancy of the 1950s and 1960s, but each time these expectations have been disappointed. The intractable problems that have produced the recession remain unsolved, as the heads of governments of the US, Canada, Japan, West Germany, France, Britain and Italy—with Mr. Roy Jenkins of the EEC—assemble in Bonn in early July for the fourth summit meeting.

After two years of depression in 1974 and 1975, there was a promising recovery in 1976; the total output of the 24 advanced capitalist countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) rose by nearly 5½ per cent and the volume of world trade by 12 per cent. In 1977, however, output grew by a mere 3½ per cent and West Germany and Japan failed by a large margin to achieve their targets. World trade expanded by only 4 per cent. The outlook for the current year is no better. The National Institute, for example, doubts whether the growth of OECD output will quite reach 3½ per cent this year, and the prospect for 1979 is little more favourable. The volume of world trade may increase by 5 per cent this year and 6 per cent in 1979—a far cry from the halcyon 1960s and early 1970s when annual increases of 10 per cent or more were the rule. Unemployment in the OECD area, which rose from 8 million in the 1972-73 boom to about 15 million in 1976, increased slightly in 1977 when a reduction in the US was counter-balanced by a rise in Western Europe. The dismal prospect of mass unemployment stretches into the future. This year there may be a slow decline in the US but a flat trend elsewhere.

The profound imbalance in the world's trading and monetary system continues unabated. In 1977 the oil exporting countries—mainly Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates—ran a surplus of $48 billion while Japan had a surplus of $11.6 billion and West Germany of $4 billion. On the other side, the OECD as a whole had a deficit of $36 billion, including a hefty $23 billion for the US, while the developing countries, who had a relatively low year, ran a combined deficit of $11 billion.

Considerable changes are expected in the current year. Restrictions against imports by OECD countries increased substantially in 1977, especially in textiles and steel, which has hit the exports of developing countries who are also adversely affected by falling commodity prices. The deficit of the developing countries is therefore likely to increase sharply this year, perhaps to around $25 billion while the deficit of the OECD countries will fall to around $9 billion, with the oil exporters still having a massive, though reduced, surplus of $36 billion. The result is a continual growth of indebtedness, serious monetary instability and fluctuating exchange rates, all tending to undermine business confidence and keep investment down.

Whenever a country runs into a serious deficit and applies to the International Monetary Fund for help, the conditions are always the same—deflationary action must be taken reducing output and employment and cutting living standards. Portugal, Turkey, Zambia, Zaire and Peru—not to speak of Britain—are among those who have suffered from the IMF medicine. On the other hand, the IMF has in practice no power (and little inclination even if it had the power) to impose any sanctions on countries running huge surpluses. Thus repeated doses of deflation have a depressing effect on world output.

This is reinforced by the fear of inflation which gripped the governments of all the major capitalist countries after the runaway inflation of 1972-73. Ever since, their first priority has been price stability. The influential report of the McCracken Group of economists, presented last year to the OECD, recommended that "a moderate rate of expansion is essential to avoid the resurgence of inflationary behaviour of this kind which characterised the 1972-73 boom". The reduction of unemployment takes second place to the fight against inflation and the policy of our Labour Government has of course been fully in line with these priorities. Indeed

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the OECD countries, taken as a whole, are likely to obtain a limited success this year in reducing the average rate of inflation to about $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, compared with 9 per cent last year (National Institute forecast).

No doubt the Bonn summit will seek to raise targets for growth, to halt the trend towards protection and to reduce the instability of the world monetary system. But it is hard to see them achieving any great advances without fundamental changes in economic strategy. In particular, the negotiations with the developing countries—the North-South dialogue—have made little progress in coping with the cumulative $120 billion trade deficit of the non-oil producing developing countries, and their total indebtedness of some $300 billion. None of the main proposals of these countries have yet been accepted by the major capitalist powers in OECD, and in particular progress towards a common commodity fund remains painfully slow. As the developing countries will not be represented at Bonn, the prospects for advancing towards a solution of their problems cannot be great.

CUL 10

This month we welcome the tenth Communist University of London. The event is now recognised by wide sections of lecturers and students as a serious attempt to bring a Marxist contribution to academic life. The 28 specialist courses, many of them based upon academic disciplines, are intended to contribute to the development of the critical capacities needed to intervene effectively in intellectual life. This in itself is a political struggle as the Gould Report and the authoritarian response indicate.

The CUL is, however, not simply an event for intellectuals but a forum where political activists can discuss problems of revolutionary strategy. The 22 general courses aim to involve participants in discussion on concrete and relevant approaches to political practice.

Open debate and pluralism have become the symbol of CUL. But discussion for controversy's sake is not the aim—rather it is to develop a Marxism and political practice rooted in the realities of Britain in the 1970s.

Firmly based on the autonomy of theoretical work and discussion but rejecting political separatism of any variety, CUL and its future represents an important test of the political maturity of the diversity of forces, intellectual and otherwise, that it seeks to involve.

MARXISM TODAY

The Editorial Board is at present discussing the role and development of the journal and, in this context, also a possible redesign of its format.

In the autumn we want to open up these discussions so that we can get a much wider cross-section of opinion about how the journal should develop. Further details of this will be given in the journal in the very near future.

TEE-SHIRTS

The *Marxism Today* tee-shirts which were on limited sales at the Peoples' Festival are now being produced in large numbers and will be available very shortly.

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The Struggle Against Racism: Theoretical and Strategic Perspectives

Gideon Ben-Tovim

(The author is a Lecturer in Sociology at Liverpool University and a member of the Merseyside Area and National Race Relations Committees of the Communist Party. He is also Secretary of the Merseyside Anti-Racialism Alliance.)

> "The claim, presented as an essential postulate of historical materialism, that every fluctuation of politics and ideology can be presented as an immediate expression of the structure, must be contested in theory as primitive infantilism, and combatted in practice with the authentic testimony of Marx, the author of concrete political and historical works." Gramsci, *Prison Note books*, p. 407.

At the plenary session of the 8th Communist University of London in 1976, Sam Aaronovich suggested that the strategy of the Communist Party was in advance of the theoretical analysis that was needed to provide the under-pinning for the *British Road to Socialism*. Even in the short time-period that has elapsed since that talk was delivered, advances at the level of theory have been developing rapidly within the British Communist Party, as was seen during the *British Road to Socialism* debate, and as can be found in the pages of *Marxism Today*, *Socialist Europe*, *Red Letters*, and *Euro-Red*, or the *Communist University Papers*.[1]

This process of theoretical enrichment and renewal within the Communist Party must be seen, however, in terms of "uneven development". The struggle against racism is one area in which the Communist Party's political intervention has not been much or recently underscored by theoretical analysis and discussion, with the exception of Dave Cook's recent pamphlet *A knife at the throat of us all*[2]; compare this to the ever-increasing depth and subtlety of the Marxist analysis of the position of women found in the Communist Party, inspired by and contributing to the development of the women's liberation movement and the struggle against sexism.

This article is an attempt to begin to fill that gap by examining some of the major strands of anti-racist political strategy to be found currently on the left in Britain and by elaborating some of their theoretical assumptions.

I ECONOMIC REDUCTIONISM IN THE ANALYSIS OF RACISM AND ITS POLITICAL EFFECTS

There is increasing acknowledgment within the Communist Party, and more generally on the British left, that much traditional Marxist analysis has suffered from economic determinism and class reductionism—that is the tendency to reduce the complexity of the political and ideological levels of a social formation to its economic base, and to reduce all social, political and ideological movements and struggles to the class interests of which such movements are the simple expression. All social contradictions, then, are reduced to the "primary" contradiction at the point of production.

In my view, this reductionism is still found within much of the left's discussion of racism: racism is reduced to its "essence", which is economic exploitation, class oppression, and the manipulation of intra-class sectarianism. Whether it is the epoch of slavery, of nineteenth-century imperialism or the contemporary capitalist metropolis, in each case racist ideologies are developed by the ruling class and the state in order to justify enslavement, colonial subjugation, and metropolitan super-exploitation or marginalisation respectively; and also to divide the working-class by the fostering of scientifically spurious "racial" divisions. Racism must therefore be fought as an aspect of class organisation and mobilisation, and in terms of the struggle for socialism.

A typical statement of this position can be found in an editorial of *Black Struggle*—a journal "against racism and capitalism":—

[1] Ed. J. Bloomfield *Class, Hegemony and Party* and Ed. S. Hibbin *Politics, Ideology and the State* (Lawrence and Wishart).

[2] D. Cook, *A knife at the throat of us all-racism and the National Front* (CP pamphlet).

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> "racism is . . . one variance of a mechanism of capitalism which facilitates, justifies and maintains the super-exploitation of blacks . . . the struggle against racism must be anti-capitalist both in its theory and practice.."[3]

Conspiracy theory

At the theoretical level this approach is inadequate in that it analyses racism as essentially a ruling-class conspiracy: capitalism "needs" a cheap or a divided labour force and the ruling class ensures that these economic and political needs are met by producing the racist ideology and practices which enable the super-exploitation and the sectarianism to occur.

The work of Oliver Cromwell Cox has been a classic source for this type of analysis:

> "race prejudice is a social attitude propagated among the public by an exploiting class for the purpose of stigmatising some group as inferior so that the exploitation of either the group itself or its resources or both may be justified . . . the capitalist exploiter will devise and employ race prejudice when that becomes convenient".[4]

Alongside this simplistic analysis of racist ideology, Marxists have tended to operate with a crude, instrumental view of the relationship between the development of state policy and the class interests expressed in such policies. Thus A. Sivanandan, in his important analysis of "the black experience in Britain", argues that shifts in British legislation on race can be directly equated with and explained by the shifting interests of British capital:—

> "Capital requires racism not for racism's sake but for the sake of capital. Hence at a certain level of economic activity (witness the colonies) it finds it more profitable to abandon the idea of superiority of capital. Racism dies in order that capital might survive".[5]

Thus we tend to see reproduced in much Marxist analysis of racism the mechanistic formulations criticised within the pages of *Marxism Today* by Paul Corrigan and Alan Booth with reference to Marxist analysis of the state,[6] or Brian Simon on the education system[7], or Martin Jacques on youth culture[8], it has parallels, too, with the early crude assessment of sexism as a product of capitalism, and the women's liberation movement as a diversion from the class struggle.

A less mechanical and more dialectical Marxist analysis would argue that an interpretation of racist ideologies and practices in terms of their fulfilment of the economic needs of capital and the political will of the ruling class is at best a very partial and over-generalised analysis, and at worst misleading and an opening to politically disastrous consequences.

Relative autonomy

The perils of economic determinism and class reductionism can be avoided by the adoption of a framework of "relative autonomy" which argues that racist ideologies and practices are not *reducible* to the economy or to class questions, central though these may be.

Thus the theories and ideologies produced by Enoch Powell, Hans Eysenck and Martin Webster have their own relatively autonomous determinations, they are the results of theoretical/ideological practices which cannot be collapsed into their "economic base" or seen in terms of their class "functions" alone: racism has a "life of its own" which cannot simply be reduced to its economic or political conditions of existence.

Similarly, racist practices, such as, segregation, genocide or exclusion, have their own political dynamic which transcends a simplistic class interest. Indeed racism may actually contradict the interests of capital rather than necessarily express them, as indeed Eugene Genovese has suggested for the USA. In Genovese's view, the political disequilibrium caused by the persistence of racism in the USA is such that the ruling class would be glad to be rid of it[9]

For Britain too it could be argued that, contrary to Sivanandan's analysis, the imposition of racist immigration controls may not in fact have a very compelling economic logic, but may rather be the outcome of the partially independent processes by which racism has become politicised in Britain.

The associated argument, suggested by *Black Struggle* and implied by Sivanandan, that Britain's improved anti-discriminatory legislation is simply a mask for political stabilisation in favour of the capitalist status quo which should therefore be opposed is similarly one-dimensional and fatalistic, denying any autonomy to the political level and

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[3] *Black Struggle*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Feb./March 1977).

[4] O. C. Cox, *Caste, Class and Race* (Monthly Review Press) p. 393. For a fuller discussion of "classical" Marxist race theory, see J. Gabriel and G. Ben-Tovim "Marxism and the concept of racism", *Economy and Society* May 1978.

[5] A. Sivanandan, "Race, class and the state: the black experience in Britain", *Race and Class*, Vol. XVII, Spring 1976.

[6] P. Corrigan, "The welfare state as an arena of class struggle", (*Marxism Today*, March 1977). A. Booth "Political Strategy and Community Politics", (*Marxism Today*, April 1978).

[7] B. Simon, "Education and social change—a Marxist perspective" (*Marxism Today*, February 1977).

[8] M. Jacques, "Trends in youth culture" (*Marxism Today*, September 1973 and April 1975).

[9] E. Genovese, *In Red and Black* (Vintage) p. 60.

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failing to see that state policy is a site of contradiction and struggle: even though the state in capitalist society may generally operate in the interests of capital, it does not, as Miliband has argued, act at its *behest*[10] and further, it may be used to enact legislation and policy which has a genuinely progressive or pro-working-class character.

Thus a more fruitful analysis of the 1976 Race Relations Act is to see it as the outcome of struggle between social and political forces which have *not* in fact been the expression of any simple class polarisation: to argue that the liberal-left coalition of anti-racists who successfully lobbied for stronger legislation actually represented the interests of capital, whilst the conservative forces who argued for a laissez-faire position were presumably objectively supporting the cause of black liberation, is quite absurd. Such a position can only be adopted through the acceptance of the leftist view that all intervention by the state is an expression of the interests of the ruling class and hence must be opposed by the self-organisation of the working class.

Racism and capitalism

This is not, of course, to advocate the abandonment from the analysis of racism of all discussion of economic and class determinants: within this framework the autonomy of racism is only relative.

Even though capitalism does not directly, exclusively, and necessarily "cause" racism—racist attitudes or practices may have existed before capitalism or may in some conditions become dysfunctional to capitalism, or may be found in existing socialist states—nevertheless it is the economic, political and ideological structures of capitalism that have been the major provider of the conditions under which racist ideologies and practices have been reproduced.

Connexions *do* have to be made, then, between racism and capitalism, between "race" relations and class structures, just as links have to be made at the political level between the anti-racist movement, class struggle, and the struggle for socialism.

Total autonomy

We reject, then, the framework of "total autonomy" where racism is seen as a totally independent and dominant force in the social structure. This has been a leading thread of conventional "race relations" scholarship in which "racial prejudice" is used as the major dynamic and explanatory factor.

This type of idealist analysis has been paralleled by some currents of radical black thought. Racism is a fundamental property of the whole of the white population, which takes on the characteristics of a colonial power—as all whites are contaminated by this force, racism is eliminable by the efforts of blacks alone, via their own movement for national and/or cultural liberation.

Here *no* connections tend to be made between class relationships and "race" relationships, parallel at the theoretical level perhaps to the radical feminist view on the irrelevance of class struggle to the struggle against men; the struggle against racism is primary and exclusive, with little attempt made to link the black struggle with the wider struggle of the working-class and the labour movement, which are in fact seen as part of the oppressive "white-power-structure".

The development of this "racial analysis"[11] has to be understood as, at least in part, a reaction to the equally one-sided refusal by many sections of the left to grant any autonomy to the black or anti-racist movement by simply equating it with class struggle and the struggle against capitalism.

Political effects of reductionism

A central political consequence, then, of the theoretical collapse of the political and ideological levels of the social formation into the economic base has been the tendency to collapse the different levels of political struggle into each other.

If racism is a simple product of capitalism, a mystique of class exploitation, eliminable only in socialist revolution, then the black and anti-racist movements must also be anti-capitalist, whilst anti-racists must be socialist, and preferably proletarian. Thus Liberals, progressive Tories, Churches, middle strata, are to be excluded in favour of a narrow stratum of proletarian and socialist forces, whilst racism is submerged within the wider struggle.

This is a subjective and elitist approach: although racism is a class issue, it is primarily a democratic and an ideological issue which demands a level of struggle that both addresses itself to the concrete reality of racist oppression and that encompasses a very broad base of political support.

Generalism

There are a number of ways in which the British left has, over the last decade, refused to acknowledge the autonomy and the specificity of the black and anti-racist movements, through its over-generalised and over-politicised class approach.

There has been a long-standing tendency in the labour movement to shy away from the issue of racism as "diversionary" and divisive and to concentrate instead on those economic issues which can unite sections of workers across colour lines.

[10] R. Miliband *Marxism and Politics* (Oxford, 1977) p. 74.

[11] R. Franklin, S. Resnik *The Political Economy of Racism* (Holt Rinehart) Ch. 8.

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Amongst more recent developments, there is the current stance of the far left in opposing immigration controls as such (and import controls too) as fostering British chauvinism and nationalism: this "internationalist" position is essentially a piece of abstract rhetoric, which ignores any serious consideration of strategic or tactical questions and prevents a concentration on the specifically racist character of current British immigration laws and controls.

The far left has also tended to equate racism with the articulation of racist ideas by fascist groups and has, accordingly, tended to equate anti-racist activity with opposition to the National Front (as well as to immigration controls). This opposition has itself been frequently of a very narrow character, on the incorrect premise that only socialists can be genuine anti-fascists. The primary emphasis given to physical confrontation with fascists has frequently been aimed at provoking a clash with the police, thus demonstrating the inevitably racist character of the capitalist state.

We have seen above how a similarly fatalistic and one-dimensional view of the state as a class "instrument" has led *Black Struggle* and A. Sivanandan to suggest that any entanglement with the state-sponsored "race relations industry" in the form of community relations councils, race relations acts etc., is to be avoided as a form of class collaboration or political co-option of black resistance, rather than seen as a site of struggle in which important gains and reforms can be won.

These approaches are made possible by an insurrectionary perspective that by-passes the need to develop a national strategy for the transition to socialism or to struggle *within* state apparatuses to democratise and transform them in favour of a simple (and utopianly international) "smashing" or destruction of the capitalist/racist state.

The dominant feature, however, of these modes of anti-racist struggle is their over-general and schematic character which has prevented the left from wrestling with the concrete complexities of British racism and hence from articulating a serious and rounded anti-racist political strategy.

II TOWARDS A NON-REDUCTIONIST ANALYSIS: THE THREE LEVELS OF BRITISH RACISM

A framework of relative autonomy enables the distinction to be made, as in Mike Power's proposal of the CP's 1977 Congress resolution on Racialism[12], between the three major levels in which racism is entrenched in Britain and can be opposed: (i) ideological/cultural (ii) institutional/structural (iii) organisational. The key to the Communist Party's strategy in combating racism is to recognise that struggle has to take place *on all three fronts*, rather than to work primarily and exclusively at one level only, as has been the case among other left or liberal forces.

(a) Ideological and Cultural Racism

The pervasion of imperial British culture, folk-lore, poetry, novels, school-books, etc., with the images and stereotypes of the savage or child-like (i.e. never fully equal and human) "native" is now increasingly well-documented[13]; those images confirmed the correctness of the British imperium, explaining and under-pinning the economic exploitation, political domination, military overlordship and social segregation that Britons were directly or indirectly experiencing, and particularly, as Eric Hobsbawm suggests, acting as

> "a mechanism by means of which a fundamentally egalitarian ideology rationalised its inequalities, and attempted to justify and defend those privileges which the democracy implicit in its institutions must inevitably challenge."[14]

At the scientific level then, racism flourished in Britain with particular vigour during the nineteenth-century, when the popularisation of evolutionary theory enabled the notion to be confirmed that some people were further advanced along the road of humanity and progress than others and were obviously equipped to rule them. The growth of nationalism and the heightening of inter-imperialist rivalries in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, and the regular increase of "colonial troubles" during the post-world war I period intensified British ethnocentrism and chauvinism which was directed at Britain's continental rivals as sharply as at her colonial subjects, albeit under the hegemony of the language of race—e.g. "wogs begin at Calais".

It is then no exaggeration to suggest that racism has been a long standing cultural deformation in Britain, especially England, affecting the uniformed and civilian working-class as strongly as the aristocratic colonial administrator or missionary and the middle class entrepreneur; and the distortions of the colonial lens linger on.

The starkness of this colonial mentality was suffered by the earlier African settlers who came into British ports like Liverpool and Cardiff in the early part of this century. Many of these ex-seamen married local white women, who often experienced

[12] CPGB 35th Congress Document No. 22 "Composite on struggle against racialism and fascism".

[13] See for e.g. D. Kuya *The dragon's teeth* (Merseyside CRC). For racism in the imperial period in general, see V. Kiernan *Lords of human kind* (Penguin).

[14] E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital* (Abacus) p. 313.

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ostracism as a result, as manifested during the 1919 "race riots" in Liverpool when white ex-servicemen rampaged through the "African" quarter deliberately attacking households where the colonial taboo on "mixed" marriage had been broken, chasing an African fireman to his death by drowning in the Mersey, and thus compelling the police to place most of Liverpool's Africans in protective custody[15]. The continuing myth of the deprived Liverpool "half-caste", born to a low-class, incapable white woman and an absent feckless African father, is a testimony to the power of the racial/colonial status-barrier[16].

Domestic racism

A new definition of Britain's black population developed during the 1950s and 1960s when ex-colonial subjects were encouraged to come to the Mother Country to fill those slots in her heavy or decaying industry, in her hospitals and railways, that the indigenous population would not or could not fill at least at the rates of pay and conditions that the employers were willing to offer. Black people came to be defined as an internal problem and burden, creating inadequacies and shortages in social services, housing and schools, and exacerbating inner-city decline and violence.

It would be tempting to analyse this process in terms of an in-built racist continuity of the British character or culture, as is suggested from within the purely autonomous, "racial" framework. But this is facile and historicist, missing out the structural and political determinants whereby the impact of history is mediated.

The transition from colonial racist ideology to contemporary indigenous racism need not be seen in a deterministic, unilinear model. The colonial ideology whereby blacks were depicted as different, savage, child-like etc., certainly provided some of the ideological conditions of existence whereby blacks have continued to be classified as different, inferior or a threat.

But a major conjunctural determinant of the new social meaning of "colour" or "blackness" was the debate over immigration controls in the 1960s when a bi-partisan view was finally articulated by politicians and the mass media that black people were a cause of friction and difficulty, a drain on our resources which we could not afford, and a group of people to whom no permanent obligations were owed despite their citizenship.

This capitulation to the racist definition of the situation—black immigrants as a major cause of Britain's social and economic problems whose inflow must therefore be severely curtailed—has been of tremendous significance in developing the contemporary framework for racism in Great Britain, and from the beginning has severely weakened the credibility of government or government-connected reform measures: thus the Labour Government's 1965 legislation to outlaw certain forms of racial discrimination was only one aspect of a fundamentally self-contradictory policy which also included further restrictions on the entry of "Commonwealth", i.e. essentially black, immigrants.

The adoption then of increasingly restrictive racist immigration controls, administered with the bureaucratic inhumanity of the British colonial and immigration services, provided a legitimate framework within which traditional colonial rightlessness could be officially transformed into the contemporary equation of black, immigrant, social problem and relatively rightless object.

The political economy of black labour

These political and ideological developments were facilitated by the material situation of black immigrants, who had been recruited to Britain as a cheap replacement labour force and who residentially also tended to act as a replacement population in those decaying centres of inner cities where housing was available.

The mounting articulation of the "problem" of blacks as economic competitors and as the cause of urban decline has therefore had some material basis on which to grow. The "moral panics" that have developed around "mugging", for example[17], have fed on the reality of the mode of subsistence of some sections of marginalised black youth; while the clamour to develop ever-tighter racist immigration controls, and the ensuing numbers game that has been an easy substitute for serious debate over immigration, have provided a common-sense focus and object for the employment insecurities and fears of the current economic crisis.

Structural factors, then, have certainly underpinned the development of ideological and cultural racism in this period: but the gradual elimination of the category of enfranchised commonwealth citizen in favour of the category of alien black contract

[15] See R. May and R. Cohen "The interaction between race and colonialism: a case study of the Liverpool race riots of 1919", *Race and Class*, October 1974; and J. Walvin, *Black and White: The Negro and English Society* 1555-1945 (Allen Lane), Ch. 13.

[16] See ed. A. Humhreys *Liverpool, a multi-racial city* (Crown St. Language Centre, Liverpool); I. Melish, P. McNabb and G. Ben-Tovim "The relevance of 'race' to educational opportunity in Inner City Liverpool" in Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, *Education* Vol. 13, (HMSO 1973), and "Patterns of discriminatory behaviour by police and in the courts facing the locally born black population in Liverpool" ibid, *Police/Immigrant Relations*, Vol. 2 (HMSO 1972).

[17] See S. Hall et al *Policing the Crisis* (Macmillan, 1978).

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labour cannot be reduced to the economic conditions of existence of this policy, although the transformation from capitalist prosperity to capitalist crisis certainly facilitated a shift in emphasis from labour recruitment (economic benefit) to immigration controls (economic costs).

It may be true to say that "in the last instance" economic factors have been the ultimate determinant of racism, in the sense that post-war British capitalism has set the structural parameters (labour needs, profitability crisis, technological under-development, youth unemployment, housing market, industrial under-investment, etc.) within which racism has developed.

But it is also essential to point out that the legal transformation in the position of black people in Britain has been fought out on the terrain of a specific ideological and political discourse (i.e. Tory vs Labour competition; internal Labour Party factional strife etc.) which has had its own independent effects and its own internal determinants.

The battle of ideas

A politics of anti-racism must therefore address itself seriously to the specificities and weight of racist ideology in Britain, by undermining the factual distortions that are implicit in racial categories and explicit in racist argumentation, by exposing the undemocratic and class-divisive aims of racialist organisations, by reiterating the universalism enshrined in both liberal and socialist ideology, by stressing the positive value of multi-culturalism and developing popular modes of multi-racial identification, by consciousness-raising amongst white and black to eradicate supremacist and subordinate attitudes, by campaigning against media stereotyping and distortions, by alternative explanations of the current crisis, and by the development of a set of demands and policies that are consistent in their opposition to all forms of racist activity and practice.

(b) Institutional and Structural Racism

Racism cannot be analysed simply in terms of an *ideology* of biologically or culturally determined differences, inferiority and necessary subordination. It is also used to refer to the *practices* whereby a particular group is separated out for various systematic types of hostile and discriminatory treatment.

The growth of British immigration controls in which the main object has been to control the entry and settlement of blacks (seen vividly in the "patrial" and "non-patrial" categories of the 1971 Act) has been, we have argued, a prime example of the way racism has become institutionalised in Britain, in this case via the legal state apparatus.

Racial discrimination or disadvantage is also well-documented in many other areas of institutionalised relationships and practices. Thus the policies and routines of police, employers, trade unionists, housing authorities or the education system may operate to ensure that black people are subjected to various inter-linked forms of oppression: they experience police harassment and criminalisation, as in the widespread use of "sus" charges against them; they are clustered in the unskilled sectors of the industrial or service working-class, in the unemployed, or at the bottom rungs of the professional or white-collar strata; they are under-represented in positions of responsibility, authority or power in the labour movement (trades union official, shop steward, city councillor, MP); they are under-represented in council housing or concentrated in poorer quality "problem" estates, and generally endure a disproportionate share of housing without basic facilities; they are over-represented in ESN schools, subject to a "hidden curriculum" of racist values, and under-placed in "A" streams, in sixth forms and in higher education.

These outcomes are not simply the result of conscious acts of racial discrimination; the normal operation of customary practices or policies may work to the unconscious disadvanatge of black people (e.g. criteria for inclusion on a council waiting list[18]); or the normal structuring of opportunities by the workings of the class system may also be involved (e.g. the universal situation of working-class people living in a working-class area with poor housing, inadequate schooling, few occupational prospects and hostile police-community relations).

Again, this picture is over-drawn: there is enormous variation of experience and structural position within the category of "black people"; there is a danger of creating a new/old stereotype of blacks as a victim/object, rather than as subjects responding to their situations with a wide range of reactions.

But specifically racist practices *do* occur: the official creation of the category of "immigrant child" within the education system and practices of enforced dispersal and bussing; the development by housing authorities of policies of involuntary racial concentration or de-ghettoisation; the police/press depiction of "mugging" as a racial offence; the social service categorisation of black children as "hard to place"; the frequent collusion by management and union in attempting to maintain certain grades of labour as exclusively white and so to artificially freeze black workers in the category of cheap unskilled labour, low-grade professional, or outside the labour market altogether; the frequent use of "colour-bars" to exclude black people from

[18] See e.g. D. Smith & A. Whalley *Racial Minorities and Public Housing* (PEP) and J. Rex & R. Moore *Race Community & Conflict* (OUP).

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club or pub; violent racial assaults; and, of course, the racial differentiations adopted by the immigration legislation.

Colour, then, is widely used in British society as a cue to, and a rationale for a stereotyped and negative response: racism has become institutionalised into the structure of British society in so many spheres that these practices cannot simply be dissolved into the practices of class discrimination, disadvantage and inequality with which they are so closely and dynamically inter-related[19]. Even if the motives behind acts of racial discrimination are concerned with maintaining class, status or power relations and positions, the effect is still one of contributing to a specifically "*racial*" oppression.

The De-institutionalisation of racism

An anti-racist political strategy, then, cannot simply operate at the ideological level of exposure, attitude-changing, and multi-celebration, vital though these are. It is also essential to develop positive policies specifically designed to "deracialise" the British institutional fabric, in all those arenas in which racism is enshrined. This will involve struggling to repeal racist immigration controls and legislation; pressing for the implementation and strengthening of legislation against racial discrimination and incitement; working towards "affirmative action" or "positive discrimination" programmes in employment and in the labour movement, and the radical extension of "job creation" schemes; the development of racially-just housing policies, and a serious onslaught on inner city decay; a de-colonisation of the education system by the saturation of the curriculum with multi-cultural materials (ethnic studies), together with the allocation of far more resources to inner city schools and an assault on teacher and pupil-racism.

Many of these reforms are being pressed through community relations councils (CRC), or could be taken up through those bodies as they have some privileged access to the local authority—although one of the contradictions of the CRCs has been their relative lack of status and resources within the local authorities: their official position elevates them from the level of campaigning grass-roots body yet fails to provide them with the means to operate successfully at the level of the council hierarchy, thus frequently suffering from a serious ambiguity which has tended to neutralise them at both levels[20].

Many of these reforms would be of universal benefit, being geared to the schools or neighbourhoods or structural situations that black people share with others; in a racist atmosphere where black people are already presented ideologically as over-protected and privileged such policies are of particular importance as a means to undermine the "racist backlash". But, again, to completely dissolve areas of specifically racial oppression into a more general class oppression is to fall into the reductionist problematic outlined above: if racism has some degree of relative autonomy, then specifically anti-racist policies must be fought for which cannot necessarily be collapsed into issues of a more universal application.

(c) Racialist Organisations

The final level at which racism operates, and where accordingly opposition has to be mounted, is at the level of those organisations (defined here as "racialist") which consciously utilise racist theory and sentiment as a major ideological device to further their political aims as have fascist parties like the National Front.

Racism and Fascism

It is important to maintain distinctions between (i) racism and fascism and (ii) fascist political parties and non-fascist parties which adopt racist policies. The failure to make these differentiations has been a central part of the largely misplaced reaction by the far left to the growth of both racism and fascism in Britain in the recent period.

The British State, as David Edgar has argued[21], has played a central role in the institutionalisation of racism, as have the Conservative and Labour Governments which have legislated racist immigration controls. But to refer to Britain as "fascist" as was suggested by Ian Macdonald in *Race and Class*[22] and as is argued by certain Maoist groups is totally misleading[23]. It involves yet again the

[19] For general discussions, see D. Smith *Racial Disadvantage in Britain* (Penguin), A. Dummett, *A portrait of English racism* (Penguin), R. Moore *Racism and Black resistance in Britain* (Pluto) S. Allen *New Minorities Old Conflicts* (Random House), J. Rex *Race Colonialism and the City* (OUP), S. Allen "The Institutionalisation of racism" *Race* XVI 1973, and *Racism—who profits?* (CIS Report).

[20] See M. Hill and R. Issacheroff *Community Action and Race Relations* (Oxford), A. Barker *Strategy and Style in Local Community Relations Councils* (Runnymede) and I. Katznelson *Black Men White Cities* (OUP). For a seminal article on "official" race relations policy, see M. & A. Dummett "The Role of government in Britain's racial crisis" in ed. L. Donnelly, *Justice First* (Sheed and Ward).

[21] D. Edgar, "Racism Fascism and the National Front" (a *Race and Class* pamphlet).

[22] I. Macdonald "Some thoughts on fascism today" *Race and Class* XVI No. 3, January 1975. Cf. reply by M. Ludmer, *Race and Class* XVI No. 4, April 1975.

[23] e.g. ARM "George Jackson, monopoly capitalism and the fascist type of state" *The Black Liberator* Vol. 2, No. 3, 1974/5.

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economic reductionism referred to above: if the state has as one of its functions the reproduction of the system of monopoly capitalism, then this view suggests that it is irrelevant whether the form of the state is a bourgeois democracy or a fascist dictatorship. They are both "dictatorships of the bourgeoisie" and are therefore equally oppressive to the working-class. The plausibility of this approach is strengthened by the authoritarian tendencies that can be indicated within the state, especially if they have a racist character.

Of course, in reality, whether or not the political form of the state is a parliamentary democracy or a fascist dictatorship is of vital significance for the articulation of a revolutionary socialist strategy; similarly, whether or not a political party is democratic like the Conservative or Labour Party, or fascist like the National Front, is of fundamental importance, even when the policies or views of these democratic parties' members or governments share some of the racist assumptions articulated by the fascist ultra-right.

Racism then may develop with or without the growth of fascist parties; fascism may or may not be racialist; parties or governments which adopt racist policies are not necessarily fascist. The struggle against racism then cannot be reduced to opposition to fascist organisations, a major strategic error compounded by the equation of state racism with fascism or right-wing Tories with the National Front.

Nationalism and populism

Many factors need to be included in a full analysis of the rise of the National Front to its current position as a serious force in British politics. At the most general level, it has to be placed in the context of the gathering post-boom economic, political and ideological crisis of British capitalism.

The mounting economic crisis has been the backcloth, the factor "determinant in the last instance" that has provided the conditions under which political and ideological trends conducive to National Front growth have developed.

The last decade has seen a new epoch of British nationalism, in which the Scottish and Welsh nationalist movements have flowered, particularly at the Labour Party's expense, the "direct result", Eric Hobsbawm suggests[24], "of the failure of the British Labour Party in the 1960s" to reverse the inter-war decline of the early industrial regions of Wales and Scotland; the other source of nationalism, Hobsbawm argues, is the increasing reaction to centralised bureaucracy that has been capitalised on by the populist style of the Nationalist Parties which have become the main bearers of these potentially democratic but also potentially sectarian and chauvinist aspirations. Thus the stress on national identity and national or regional rights has opened the door to an English nationalism in which a racially authoritarian "Little Englandism" is replacing the previous racially paternalistic internationalism of "Great Britain".

The growth of the nationalist parties has been one expression of the increasing political volatility of the British electorate that has also worked to the advantage of the National Front. The move from Labour in Scotland and Wales is an indication of the growing inability of the Labour Party to maintain its solid core of industrial working-class votes; similarly the Liberal eclipse of the Conservatives in Liverpool has indicated the potentially fragile nature of the solidarity of lower-middle class Tory voters who have been won over by the relative dynamism and populist style of the Liverpool Liberals. The ability of the National Front to draw in previous supporters of both the Labour and the Conservative Parties is a tribute both to the potential political instability of the current situation, and the relative skill of the National Front leadership.

Turn to the Right

Alongside this fluidity we have seen an increasing political polarisation in this recent period, which has worked out largely to the advantage of the right. The post-war "Butskellist" political consensus between moderate Labour and moderate Tory to accept social democracy and the interventionist, welfare state (within capitalist confines) has been finally broken, through the ascendancy of the Thatcherite wing of the Conservative Party. This is a reflection of the increasing vigour in recent years of the right as manifested by the growth of the National Association for Freedom, Powellism, the Institute for the Study of Conflict, the Black Papers in Education, Sir Keith Joseph's "Policy Centre", Bernard Levin's crusade for "moderate" trade unionism, and other such developments.

This internal development within the Conservative Party must be seen within the context of the more general shift to the right in British society which the Tories, along with the mass media, have been reflecting and articulating. The recent period has seen, as Stuart Hall suggests, the increasingly elaborated construction of an "authoritarian popular social consensus" in British society, a "growing law and order mood", a

> "striking toughening in popular social attitudes, marked by a return to traditional standards and practices in education, a call for stricter discipline, a stern defence of the family and traditional ethical and sexual codes, an abrasive stance towards

[24] E. Hobsbawm "Some reflections on the break-up of Britain" *New Left Review*, No. 105 (Sept./Oct. 1977).

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anyone who is "scrounging" on the welfare state or not pulling his weight in society, support for tougher sentences and policing policies and harsher prison sentences, and so on".[25]

This theme, the backlash perhaps to the social permissiveness and political advances of the swinging sixties and the subversive seventies—the epoch of youth culture, student power, drugs, gays, black power, communes, women's liberation, trade union militancy, sit-ins and occupations, the growth of the left and the renaissance of Marxism—has been taken up with venom by the National Front who are as hostile to gays, liberated women, and "liberalism" as they are to reds and blacks.

Crisis, scapegoat and National Front organisation

The material basis for these political and ideological currents has been the mounting economic insecurities and deprivations facing the manual working class, the self-employed, and even white-collar and professional workers in the period of the recent economic recession, with inflation, unemployment, and public spending cuts affecting most sectors of the population.

In this situation black people have been increasingly identified by the National Front as the symbol of British decline and the scapegoat for the current crisis: blacks are the muggers, the welfare state scroungers, the privileged competitor for the scarce resources of jobs and housing, the burden whose backwardness is pulling down British standards, the tangible base from which to attack the state, the liberals, the left and the churches who protect the blacks and trample on the Englishman's freedom.[26]

This scapegoating process appears to have been particularly effective in those areas where the presence of "coloured immigrants" and the material shortages, decay, and insecurities can be tied together into a simple causal chain—particularly where the position of immigrant workers as a culturally differentiated "under-class" (e.g. Asian workers on a segregated nightshift in a poorly unionised industry in a declining community) involves major discontinuities in experience and contact that provide a material base for the acceptance of divisive racialist propaganda.

Racism then is increasingly becoming the populist binding for the authoritarian consensus that is being constructed by a wide range of social, cultural and political forces in Britain, of which the National Front is only the most overt and the most aggressive.

It is not being suggested that the recent advance of the National Front can be seen as the inevitable product of these general economic, political and ideological trends of post-boom Britain. The rise of the Front must also be examined in terms of its own determinate political and ideological practices: the welding together of the earlier sects, the internal struggles, the development of its cadres, and its organisation, the growth of its populist style, its general ideology and programme[27]. The overall socio-economic background cannot explain the success of the National Front, whether simplistic notions of ruling class interests or devices are used[28] or a more elaborate analysis of British social developments; neither can an internal account of National Front theory and policy that is isolated from the material and ideological conditions to which they are addressed and through which they are mediated.

Anti-Front Strategies

It follows from this brief analysis that the strategy of attempting to "smash" the Front by forceful confrontation alone is misguided. If the National Front is currently developing a populist programme which is causing reverberations amongst sections of the working-class and the petit-bourgeoisie through its articulation of a widely accepted and state-supported racist ideology, and through its ability to fill the space for popular, community politics vacated by the Labour Party, then a strategy of simply taking them on at street level leaves untouched the wider political and ideological spaces and the wider societal racism.

Thus we have seen the struggle against the National Front being diverted into an abstract debate around "free speech", when the conditions have demanded, as the main thrust of anti-fascist activity, a non-violent but vigorous and imaginative campaign of propaganda, and legal pressure to

[25] S. Hall in *Football Hooliganism* by R. Ingram et al (Inter-Action 1978).

[26] See "John Tyndall's vision" in *Lewisham, August 13, 1977* (Half Moon Photography Workshop).

[27] See M. Walker *The National Front* (Fontana); *The National Front investigated* (Labour Research Department 1978); back copies of *Searchlight*; and I. Crewe *The Politics of Race* (Croom Helm 1975).

[28] For this issue, NB Mihaly Vajda's argument that:
"on the one hand fascism can only be accounted for if it is treated as a phenomenon of capitalist society, but on the other hand it cannot be regarded as a movement which is actually launched by the ruling class and moreover it openly contradicts the interests of the ruling class in certain cases."
M. Vajda, *Fascism as a mass movement* (Allison & Busby, 1976) p. 8. Cf E. Laclau's discussion of Marxism's "simplification of the analysis of fascism" in the late 1930s and '40s in his *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, "Fascism and Ideology" p. 82 (New Left Books, 1977).

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isolate the National Front, to prove that it is the *National Front* who are undemocratic, and to argue the need for National Front speeches, activities and marches to be monitored and arraigned for specific breaches of the Race Relations and Public Order Acts.

As it is, the obsession by sections of the ultra-left with physically "crushing" the National Front and with preventing them having any platform irrespective of the support won or earnable for the counter-action, the means used and the specific conjunctural conditions, has perhaps worked to the advantage of the National Front, by winning it publicity, and enabling the police and other arms of the state to support the fascists or at least to be neutral in their blanket treatment of left and right demonstrators, marches, public meetings, etc.

The rest of the left, the Labour movement and the liberal forces must accept some responsibility for the initiative having lain in the hands of the National Front and the right, as they have largely failed to develop a popular, non-violent and creative opposition to the National Front, and, more widely, a popular and democratic politics. It is significant to note here that the most imaginative and contemporary approach to anti-fascist struggle is to be found in the work of the Anti-Nazi League, Rock Against Racism and associated groups, organisations in which the "old left"—Tribune MPs, the Communist Party and the trade union movement—have not been major forces, but where, if any group is "hegemonic", it is, ironically perhaps, the Socialist Workers Party.

The particular importance of these groups is their ability to reach out in a counter-populist style to the sector of working-class, unorganised, unemployed, school student or culturally defined (e.g. "punk") youth whose very distance from and frequent disillusionment with the labour movement and the left might tend to make them a potentially significant source of fascist support.

However, just as racism cannot be equated with fascism, so opposition to racism cannot be limited to essentially anti-fascist or anti-nazi opposition, however broad-based and imaginative the approach: for as David Edgar has argued,

> "an anti-fascist strategy which concentrates solely or primarily on defeating the National Front will have little practical or ideological effect on the racist attitudes of the population at large or the state apparatus that enshrines them".[29]

III THE STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

We have suggested then that a framework of "relative autonomy" demands of the left that it addresses itself to each of the three inter-linked and mutually indispensable sites of specifically anti-racist struggle (ideological, institutional and organisational) without collapsing them into the more general arena of class struggle. This must involve a respect for the autonomy of black or ethnic organisations or of black caucuses within "mixed" groups.

But this framework also requires that links be forged between anti-racist, black struggle and the struggle for socialism, for a Marxist perspective argues that it is only socialism under conditions of economic planning, popular democratic political control, and collectivist but pluralist culture that can provide the necessary, *albeit not sufficient*, structural, political and ideological conditions for the elimination of racism.

But the links between the struggles cannot be forged in the old mechanical way, still found in many sections of the left, of simply exposing capitalism's inability to tackle racism and making abstract propaganda for socialism on that basis. This is a fatalist and ultimately insurrectionary perspective.

Rather it must be acknowledged that in this sphere of struggle, as in so many others, many positive reforms and improvements *can* be won from the capitalist state, such as anti-racist legislation, youth employment and retraining opportunities, urban renewal, adult further education, etc. Of course such advances may be limited, and the major transformations of the economy, employment-structure, housing and education required to uproot structural racism may be unattainable in the near future. But nonetheless serious inroads can be made at levels of national government and local authority, if mass united anti-racist struggle begins to take on concrete and attainable political objectives.

The key issue for revolutionaries at this point was raised in a general way by Betty Matthews in her recent *Marxism Today* article, when she talked of the problem of moving from the defence of rights under attack, typified perhaps by the black and anti-racist movements, to that of "consciously challenging the strongholds and structures of capitalist power".[30]

Constructive solutions

The linking mechanism here, as in many other arenas of struggle, is perhaps the projection of "constructive solutions" to aspects of racism which both address themselves adequately to black people's specific problems but also involve an extension of democracy, structural changes, and a limitation of ruling class power.

At the level of institutionalised and structural racism, an attack on practices which promote racial

[29] D. Edgar *op. cit.*

[30] B. Matthews "Notes on democratic struggle in the transition to socialism" (*Marxism Today*, March 1978) p. 83.

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discrimination, disadvantage or oppression involves the development of policies of conscious intervention in the market for housing and jobs, and in the spheres of education, planning and the legal/judicial system. This constitutes a continuing erosion of the principles of capitalist production and reproduction as well as an attack on general policies which disadvantage and oppress the working class as a whole, such as the cut-back in public expenditure. Furthermore the consciousness and organisation of black and ethnic groups is compelling such state intervention to be democratic, in so far as black reactions to white paternalism, bureaucracy and authority (and to black tokenism) involve demands for dialogue, participation and control in local decision-making and resource allocation.

At the ideological level, a positive stress on multiculturalism indicates a respect for pluralism which the left, and especially the Communist Party, must actively promote, both for its intrinsic value and as a means towards the elimination of the equation of socialism with monolithism and ideological/cultural repression; an attack on "racial bias" in school text-books and the media opens the door to the analysis and opposition to the more general class bias within the school curriculum, and in the educational and ideological apparatuses in general, that provides an important source of ruling class hegemony; and the need to provide alternative explanations for Britain's crisis, urban decline etc., to the racial and anti-Marxist "analyses" of the National Front, Powell and Thatcher, facilitates and often directly demands the articulation of a left-wing, democratic perspective.

Broad democratic alliance

Finally at the organisational level: the development of opposition to racism and fascism has the potential for concretely drawing together most of the elements of the "broad democratic alliance" envisaged in the *British Road to Socialism*. Already many of the anti-racist, anti-fascist or anti-Nazi committees show a healthy range of social forces through the involvement of black and ethnic organisations, the trade unions, women's groups, the gay movement, community groups, students and religious organisations, and through their ability to win the support of a very wide range of political groups, including the Broad Left (Labour and Communist Parties, and unaligned socialists) Liberals, the far left, and progressive Tories.

The extension and solidification of the anti-racist movement through the recognition of both its autonomy and its relativity will not simply have the defensive significance of supporting the struggles of black people against oppression and of undermining the current right-wing and fascist offensives in Britain that have increasingly been using racism as their major energising force; it can also play a very big part in forging a network of broad-based local alliances whose struggles can enforce ideological, political and material changes that may have an important transforming character, in dynamising, perhaps, a new egalitarian and anti-authoritarian popular consensus, spearheading a significant political realignment of class forces, and imposing democratic and structural reforms of value to the whole of the working class and popular strata.

Role of the Communist Party

However the maintenance of such a system of alliances is highly complex and fragile, as a number of deep ideological divisions, and sectional antagonisms may be involved in these formations.

Only the most skilful political leadership can maintain the unity of such diverse groups around positive activities and demands, a role that the Communist Party can play on account of its heterogeneous membership, its contacts and roots, and its strategic rather than simply tactical commitment to pluralism and to the necessity and value of such alliances.

But the Communist Party must recognise in the success of the Anti-Nazi League/Rock Against Racism grouping and the growing influence and scope of the Socialist Challenge/Socialist Unity bloc that other forces of the left are able to play a significant dynamising role, particularly amongst working-class youth whose structural position, experiences and ideological orientation leaves them untouched by other anti-racist or anti-fascist groups and alienated from more formal political formations, trade unions or voluntary associations, or amongst black organisations who have written off the "old left" for having failed to adequately combat racism within the labour movement.

Finally the Communist Party must itself practice "relative autonomy" in its own relationship to the anti-racist movement: as well as acting as a major, though by no means exclusive, unifying force, it must also present itself as an autonomous political organisation with its own independent demands, campaigns, meetings and publications.

The struggle against racism, and the related though not interchangeable struggle against fascism, has at last been recognised as one of the most important tasks facing the labour and progressive movements: for the Communist Party it poses the challenge of whether it has the flexibility and imagination, the political maturity and freedom from sectarianism, the revolutionary élan and the revolutionary realism to find ways of bringing to life and sustaining in a positive political direction its key strategic conception of the broad democratic alliance.

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The Crisis of Marxism

Louis Althusser

The following article is based on a speech made to the conference organised in Venice on November 11-13 1977 *by* Il Manifesto *on the subject of "post-revolutionary society", a conference which brought together a number of Marxists and socialists from West and East Europe. The proceedings of the conference are available in Italian in the volume* Potere e opposizione nelle società post-rivoluzionarie, *published by Alfani editore; a French edition is also available, published by Le Seuil.*[1]

I shall limit myself to a brief reflection on the situation which we are living through. Because our interest in the exiles from Eastern Europe is not only based on a need for information, nor just a manifestation of solidarity. What is happening in the Eastern countries involves us directly. For what is happening there is also happening to us. Everything which goes on in these countries is of immediate concern to us, and has an impact on our points of view, the objectives of our struggle, our theory, our battles and ways of working.

I must apologise in advance for presenting my comments, in the space of a few minutes, rather roughly and schematically—without the necessary nuances. But for a certain time now people have been starting to talk among themselves about a *crisis of Marxism*. In her opening remarks Rossana Rossanda used this phrase.

There are phrases which have played such a dubious role in the history of social struggles that you hesitate to use them. For a century, the phrase "the crisis of Marxism" has itself been used over and over again by the enemies of the Labour Movement —but for their own purposes, in order to predict its collapse and death. They have exploited the difficulties, the contradictions and the failures of the Labour Movement in the interest of the class struggle of the bourgeoisie. Today they are exploiting the horrors of the Soviet camps and their sequels against Marxism. Intimidation also has its place in the class struggle.

We must meet the challenge of this intimidation by taking up the phrase "the crisis of Marxism", but giving it a completely different sense from collapse and death. We have no reason to be afraid of the term. Marxism has experienced other periods of crisis e.g., the one which led to the "bankruptcy" of the Second International, its desertion to the camp of class collaboration. But Marxism survived. We must not be afraid to use the phrase: it is clear from many signs that today Marxism is once again in crisis, and that this crisis is an open one. Which means visible to everyone, including our enemies, who are doing everything in their power to exploit the situation. But we are accustomed to these diversionary tactics. We, ourselves, can not only *see* the crisis: we are *living through it*, and have been for a long time.

What is this crisis of Marxism? A phenomenon which must be grasped at the historical and world level, and which concerns the difficulties, contradictions and dilemmas in which the revolutionary organisations of struggle based on the Marxist tradition are now involved. Not only is the unity of the International Communist Movement affected, and its old forms of organisation destroyed, but its own history is put in question, together with its traditional strategies and practices. Paradoxically, at the moment of the most serious crisis which imperialism has ever known, at a moment when the struggles of the working class and of the people have reached unprecedented levels, the different Communist Parties are all going their own separate ways. The fact that the contradiction between different strategies and practices is having its own effects on Marxist theory itself is only a secondary aspect of this profound crisis.

Something which has "snapped"

At its most direct, most obvious level, this crisis is expressed in remarks like those made here yesterday by our comrades, the workers of Mirafiore. They said: for many of us, something has "snapped" in the history of the labour movement between its past and present, something which makes its future unsure. At least at first sight, and perhaps also at a deeper level. For *it is a fact* that it is no longer possible today, as it was, to "integrate" the past and present, to "integrate" on the one hand October 1917, the enormous world role of the Soviet Revolution, as well as Stalingrad, with on the other hand the horrors of the Stalin regime and the oppressive Brezhnev system. These same comrades said that if it is no longer possible, as it used to be, to hold the past and present together, it is because there no longer exists in the minds of the masses any "achieved ideal", any really living reference for socialism. We are told that the countries of Eastern

[1] The article was translated by Grahame Lock.

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Europe are socialist countries, but that nevertheless, for us, socialism is something quite different. This simple fact did not of course pass by unnoticed: it gave rise to the shock-effect of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, and was taken up and expressed in the repeated declarations of the leaders of the Western Communist Parties to the effect that "there is no single model of socialism", that "we reject the idea of models", etc. That is all true, but it does not provide an answer to the question posed by the masses. For you cannot really hope to *grasp* the present situation simply by arguing that there are "several paths to socialism". Because in the last resort you cannot then avoid the other question: what will prevent this "different type of socialism", arrived at by a different path, from ending up just like the existing forms of socialism? And the answer to this question depends on another: why and how did Soviet socialism lead to Stalin and to the present regime?

But this last, key question, has not been properly answered.

The crisis which we are living through has been aggravated by a special circumstance. Not only has something "snapped" in the history of the Communist movement, not only has the USSR "moved on" from Lenin to Stalin and Brezhnev, but the Communist Parties themselves, organisations of class struggle claiming to base themselves on Marx, have not really provided any explanation of this dramatic history—twenty years after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Party! They have either been unwilling or unable to do so. And behind their reticence or politically motivated refusals, behind the ridiculous phrases which we know only too well ("the personality cult", "violations of socialist legality", "the backwardness of Russia", not to speak of the way in which we *have been repeatedly assured* that "the USSR has built the foundations for democracy—just wait a little longer and it will come to flower"), behind all this there lies something more serious: that is, the extreme difficulty (everyone working seriously on the problem knows this very well) and perhaps even, in the present state of our theoretical knowledge, almost the impossibility of providing a really satisfactory Marxist explanation of a history which was, after all, made in the name of Marxism! If this difficulty is not a simple myth, it means that we are now living through a situation which is revealing to us the limits in Marxist theory, and behind these limits some critical difficulties.

I think that we must go so far as to say that the crisis of Marxism has not spared Marxist theory: it does not take place outside of the theoretical sphere, in a simple historical domain of chance, accidents and dramas. As Marxists we cannot satisfy ourselves with the idea that Marxist theory exists somewhere, in pure form, without being involved in and compromised by the hard task of the historical struggles and their results in which it is directly concerned, as a "guide" to action. It would be quite idealistic, as Marx ceaselessly pointed out, to consider that Marxist theory is, as a theory, responsible for the history made in its name: it is not "ideas", not even Marxist ideas, which make" history", just as it is not "self-consciousness" (the self-application of the name "Marxist") which defines a man or an organisation. But it would be equally idealistic to consider that Marxist theory is not involved in and compromised by the hard test of a history in which the actions of organisations of class struggle inspired by Marxism or calling themselves Marxist have played an important or determining role. A Marxist only has to take seriously the argument concerning the primacy of practice over theory in order to recognise that Marxist theory really is involved in the political practice which it inspires or which uses it as a reference: in its strategic and organisational dimensions, in its ends and means. The forms and effects of this involvement necessarily reflect back on the theory, provoking or revealing conflicts, changes, differences and deviations: these forms and these effects themselves have a political dimension. It is in this sense that Fernando Claudin spoke, as long as eight years ago, of a "theoretical crisis", in order to analyse the crisis of the International Communist Movement, and that Bruno Trentin referred a short while ago to organisational questions (the relation between party and trades unions) as themselves having a theoretical meaning and importance.

It is in this profoundly political sense that we are forced today, it seems to me, to speak of a theoretical crisis within Marxism, in order to clarify the ways in which it affects what is called Marxist theory itself: and in particular the fact that a number of apparently infallible principles inherited from the Second and Third Internationals have now been placed in doubt. It is only too clear that we cannot escape from the shock-effects provoked by the crisis of the International Communist Movement, whether open (the Sino-Soviet split) or veiled (between the Soviet and Western Communist Parties), nor from the questions posed by the ceremonial or silent abandonment of principles as important as that of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" without any demonstrable theoretical or political reason, nor again from the problems posed by the uncertain perspectives of the present struggles. The obvious political dead-ends, the diversity of strategies, their contradictions, the confusion produced by different ways of speaking and different references—all these have an evident political significance, which must have an impact on Marxist theory itself. This in fact poses a number of problems for Marxist theory, not

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only with regard to the contradictions of the present historical situation, but also with regard to its own character.

Three reactions to the crisis of Marxism

In these circumstances, if we leave aside the exploitation of Marxism by its enemies, we can, very schematically, distinguish three reactions to this crisis.

1. The first reaction, characteristic of certain Communist Parties, is to close their eyes so as not to see, and to keep quiet: in spite of the general disaffection from which it suffers among the masses and young people of Eastern Europe, Marxism continues to be the official theory and ideology there. Officially there is no crisis of Marxism, it is an invention of the enemies of Marxism. Other parties take account of the problem, and in a pragmatic manner take their distance on certain selected points, or on others "abandon" a number of "embarrassing" formulae, but always keeping up appearances: they do not call the crisis by its name.

2. The second consists in absorbing the shock of the crisis, in living through it and suffering under it, while at the same time looking for genuine reasons for hope in the power of the Labour Movement and the movement of the people. No-one among us can entirely avoid this reaction, which is however accompanied by many questions and doubts. Because you cannot go on forever living with a minimum of perspective and reflection on an historical phenomenon of such great importance: the power of the Labour Movement is a reality, that is true, but it cannot alone take the place of a proper explanation, perspective and distance.

3. The third type of reaction is precisely to view the matter with sufficient historical, theoretical and political perspective, in order to try to discover—even if the task is not easy—the character, meaning and implications of the crisis. If we succeed in this, we can then start talking in a different way, and emerging from a long history, instead of stating that "Marxism is in crisis", we can say: "At last the crisis of Marxism has exploded! At last it is in full view! At last something vital and alive can be liberated by this crisis and in this crisis!"

This is not just a paradoxical way of presenting the question, nor merely an arbitrary way of turning it on its head. In using the term "finally", I mean to draw attention to a point which is in my opinion crucial: that the crisis of Marxism is not a recent phenomenon; it does not date only from recent years, nor even from the crisis of the International Communist Movement, which opened publicly with the Sino-Soviet split and has been deepened by the "differences" between the Western and Soviet Communist Parties; it does not even date from the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Even if it has only come to public attention since the crisis of the International Communist Movement broke out, the crisis of Marxism is actually much older.

A blocked crisis

If the crisis of Marxism has exploded, if it has now at the end of a long process become visible, that is because it has been hatching for a very long time: within forms which have *prevented* it from exploding. Without trying to go back into history in order to find the first steps or causes of this crisis in a more distant period of history, we can say that *for us*, very schematically, the crisis of Marxism emerged in the 1930s: and at the same time as it emerged, was suppressed. It was in the 1930s that Marxism—which had been alive, living from its own contradictions—became blocked, entrenched in "theoretical" formulae, within a line and in practices imposed by the historical control of Stalinism. In resolving the problems of Marxism in his own way, Stalin imposed "solutions" whose effect was to block the crisis which these solutions had themselves provoked and reinforced. In transgressing what Marxism had been, even within the framework of its own elementary character and difficulties, Stalin in effect provoked a serious crisis in Marxism, but with the same means he blocked the crisis and prevented it from exploding.

The situation which we are living through today does therefore have this advantage: that at the end of a long and tragic history, this crisis has indeed finally exploded, and in conditions which oblige us to take a fresh view, and may allow new life to be breathed into Marxism. Of course, not every crisis contains in itself, of itself, the promise of a new future and liberation. Nor can a mere understanding of the crisis guarantee that this future will ever arrive. That is why it would be wrong to relate the "explosion" of the crisis of Marxism simply to the dramatic history which led to the 20th Congress of the CPSU and to the crisis of the International Communist Movement. In order to understand the conditions which led to the "explosion" of the crisis, to its becoming a living force, we must also look at the other side of the matter: not only what is dying off, but what is emerging to take its place: the power of an unprecedented mass movement of the workers and of the people, which has at its disposal new historical forces and potentialities. If we can today speak of the crisis of Marxism in terms of possible liberation and renewal, it is because of the historical power and capacities of this mass movement. It is this movement which has opened a breach in our closed history, and which in its repeated endeavours (the Popular Fronts, the Resistance), therefore both in its defeats and in its victories (Algeria, Vietnam) and in the daring challenges of 1968 in France, Czechoslovakia and

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elsewhere in the world, finally swept aside the system of obstacles and provided Marxism with a real chance of liberation.

But these first signs of liberation are also a warning. We cannot content ourselves with turning backwards to the past, towards positions which we consider to have simply been distorted or betrayed. The crisis through which we are living forces us to change something in our relation to Marxism, and in consequence, to change something in Marxism itself.

We cannot in fact accept that everything is solved simply by invoking the role of Stalin. We cannot consider our historical, political and even theoretical tradition as a *pure* heritage, which was distorted by an individual called Stalin, or by the historical period which he dominated. There is no original "purity" of Marxism that only has to be rediscovered. During the whole testing period of the 1960s when we, in our different ways, went "back to the classics", when we read or re-read Marx, Lenin and Gramsci, trying to find in them a living Marxism, something which was being snuffed out by Stalin-type formulae and practices, we were all forced, each in his own way, even within our differences, to admit the obvious—namely, that our theoretical tradition is not "pure"; that, contrary to Lenin's over-hasty phrase, Marxism is not a "block of steel", but contains difficulties, contradictions and gaps, which have also played, at their own level, their role in the crisis, as they already did at the time of the Second International, and even at the beginning of the Third (Communist) International, while Lenin was still alive.

The contradictions in Marxism

This is why I am tempted to say: we are now faced with the vital necessity of reviewing very closely a certain idea which we formed, in history and in the struggle, of these authors, of Marx, Lenin, Gramsci and Mao—an idea obviously rooted in the demand for the ideological unity of our parties, an idea which, *in spite of our critical efforts*, we have depended on for too long and which we still sometimes cling to. Our chosen authors provided us with a set of theoretical elements of an unprecedented and priceless kind. But we must remember Lenin's perfectly clear phrase: Marx "gave us the corner-stones . . .". None of the classics gave us a unified and finished whole, but a set of works comprising a number of solid theoretical principles and analyses, *mixed up with* difficulties, contradictions and gaps. There is nothing astonishing about that. If they provided us with the beginnings of a theory of the conditions and forms of the class struggle in capitalist societies, it is nevertheless absurd to consider that this theory could have been born in a "pure" and complete form. Besides, for a materialist, what could the idea of a pure and complete theory mean? And how could we imagine that a theory of the conditions and forms of the class struggle which denounced the hold and the weight of the dominant ideology could completely escape, from its first moments, from this very ideology, without being marked by it in some way, even in the struggle to break with it? How could we imagine that, in its political and ideological history, this theory could have escaped from any back-lash, from any contagion by the dominant ideology? The break with this ideology is a struggle, but it is a struggle which never comes to an end—a truth which we had to pay for dearly in order to learn. And since even the unpublished papers and the mere study notes of the classic authors are now being dug up, justifying a certain required idea about these authors, let us be honest enough to recognise that these men, who were advancing in unknown territory, were—whatever their qualities—simple men: they were searching and discovering, but also hesitating, exposed to the mistakes, to the constant need for correction and to the errors bound up with all research. There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the fact that their works bear the mark of the ideas of their "time", that they contain difficulties, contradictions and gaps.

It is very important today to realise that these manifest difficulties, contradictions and gaps do exist, and to take full and clear account of them, both in order to draw the consequences for our own situation, to clarify certain aspects of the crisis which we are living through, and to recognise its liberating aspect, to appreciate the historical opportunity which it offers us, provided that we are able to put things right. For certain of these difficulties touch precisely on vital points of the present crisis.

In order to make the point clearer, I shall give some very rough examples.

Exploitation, State and class struggle

In the work of Marx himself, in particular in *Capital*, there exists a theoretical unity which—as we are beginning to see quite clearly—is in large part fictitious. I am not just referring to the fact that Marx thought it necessary to begin ("every beginning is difficult [...] in all sciences") with an analysis of commodities, therefore of value (which poses many problems), but to the effects of this beginning and of a unity of thought imposed on *Capital* which manifestly correspond to a certain idea of Marx himself concerning the kind of unity which ought to be displayed by a true theory. One of the most important of these effects is connected with the question of surplus value. When you read Section 1 of Book 1 of *Capital*, you find a theoretical presentation of surplus value: it is an arithmetical presenta-

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tion, in which surplus value is *calculable*, defined by the difference (in value) between the value produced by labour power on the one hand, and the value of the commodities necessary for the reproduction of this same labour power (wages) on the other. And in this arithmetical presentation of surplus value, labour power figures purely and simply as a commodity. It is clear that this arithmetical presentation of surplus value conforms with the order of exposition followed by Marx: it therefore depends on his "starting point" and on subsequent distinctions (constant capital transferring a part of its value to the commodity, variable capital invested in labour power). *Even if* we were to accept this starting point, this beginning, and these distinctions, we should still be forced to note that the presentation of surplus value as a mere calculable quantity—which thus completely ignores the conditions of extraction of surplus value (conditions of labour) and the conditions of the reproduction of labour power—may lead to a very strong temptation: *for this* (arithmetical) *presentation of surplus value may be taken for a complete theory of exploitation*, causing us to neglect the conditions of labour and of reproduction. Marx does however talk about these conditions—but in other chapters of this work, the so-called "concrete" or "historical" chapters, which in fact stand *outside* of the order of exposition (the chapters on the working day, on manufacture and modern industry, on primitive accumulation, etc.). This naturally poses the question of the presuppositions and concepts bound up with this "order of exposition", which have produced certain practical consequences. You can in fact seriously question whether this misunderstanding concerning the arithmetical presentation of surplus value, taken for a complete theory of exploitation, has not finally constituted a theoretical and political obstacle, in the history of the Marxist Labour Movement, to a correct understanding of the conditions and forms of exploitation, and whether this restrictive conception of exploitation (as a purely calculable quantity) and of labour power (as a simple commodity) has not contributed in part to a classical division of tasks in the class struggle between the economic struggle and the political struggle, therefore to a restrictive conception of each form of struggle, which began to hinder, and is today still hindering the broadening of the forms of the whole working class and people's struggle.

There are other difficulties in Marx, and also many enigmas. For example the enigma of philosophy, and in particular of the dialectic, on which Marx said nothing except to propose a few formulae too schematic to be taken literally and too equivocal to be thought through. There is the question of the relation between the dialectic in Marx and in Hegel. There is a lot at stake in this question, in spite of its apparently very abstract and philosophical character: it concerns the conception of necessity and of history, and of the forms of history (does it have a meaning and an end? Is the collapse of capitalism inevitable? etc.), i.e. the conception of the class struggle and of revolutionary action. Marx's silence, and the difficulty of reconstituting his philosophical positions on the basis of his writings, did in fact—with some exceptions (Lenin, Gramsci)—open the road to positivism and evolutionism, whose forms were fixed and frozen for thirty years by Stalin's chapter on "Dialectical and Historical Materialism" in the *Short History of the CPSU(B)*.

Another example. There exist in Marx and Lenin two theoretical gaps of great importance: on the one hand on the State, on the other hand on the organisations of class struggle.

We have to be frank about it: there does not *really* exist any "Marxist theory of the State". Not that Marx and Lenin tried to dodge the question—it lies at the heart of their political thought. But what you find in the classical authors is above all, in the form of the establishment of a relation between class struggle and class rule (decisive indications, but left unanalysed), only a repeated warning to avoid all the bourgeois conceptions of the State: therefore a negative demarcation line and definition. Marx and Lenin do say that there exist "types of State". But how does the State ensure class rule, how does the State apparatus function? Neither Marx nor Lenin begin to analyse these questions. In this light, something pathetic strikes you when you re-read the lecture given by Lenin on July 11, 1919 at the Sverdlov University *On the State*. He insists: this is a difficult, a very complicated question. . . . Over and over again, Lenin repeats: the State is a special machine, a special apparatus, continually making use of the term "special" in order to point out very clearly that the State is not a machine like other machines—but without ever succeeding in telling us what "special" might mean here (nor "machine", nor "apparatus"). Something pathetic strikes you when you re-read in the same light Gramsci's little equations written in prison (the State = coercion + hegemony, dictatorship + hegemony, force + consensus, etc.) which are the expression less of a theory of the State than of a search, in terms borrowed from "political science" as much as from Lenin, for a political line aiming at the conquest of State power by the working class. The pathos of Lenin and of Gramsci comes from the fact that they attempt to transcend the classical negative definition—but gropingly, and without success.

But this question of the State is today vital for the labour and people's movement: vital for the comprehension of the countries of Eastern Europe where the State, far from "withering away", is

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drawing increased power from its fusion with the Party; vital when the question is posed of how the forces of the people are to obtain power and to work in the direction of a revolutionary democratic transformation of the State, with a view to its withering away.

Analogously, you will not find in the Marxist heritage any real theory of the organisations of class struggle, and above all of political parties and trades unions. There do of course exist political, therefore practical arguments concerning parties and trade unions, but nothing which really allows us to grasp their functioning, including the forms of their malfunctioning. The Labour Movement did long ago begin to equip itself with trade unionist and political organisations of struggle, on the basis of its own traditions but also on the basis of existing bourgeois organisations (including ,where necessary, the military model). These forms have been conserved and modified: they have a whole history, which they have survived. In the East as in the West we are confronted with the grave problem of the relation existing between these organisations and the State: with the problem, in the East, of the fusion of these organisations with the State, an open fusion; with the problem, in the West, of the *risk* of fusion, because the bourgeois State never stops trying to integrate the organisations of class struggle of the working class into its own operations, often with success.

Mass initiatives

But these two "gaps" in Marxist theory are bound up with questions which are decisive for us. What is the nature of the State, and in particular of the type of State found in present-day imperialist societies? What is the nature, what is the mode of functioning of the parties and trade unions? How can we escape the risk of an eventual fusion of the State and Party? How can we grasp now, in order to spur on the process, the need for the "destruction" of the bourgeois State, and prepare the "withering away" of the revolutionary State? How can we review and modify the nature and functioning of the organisations of class struggle? How can we transform the traditional Communist image of the Party, whether as "the party of the working class" or as "the leading party", how can we transform its ideology in order to allow it to recognise in practice the existence of other parties and of other movements? And above all—the most important of questions for past and future—how can relations be established with the mass movement which, transcending the traditional distinction between trade union and party, will permit the development of initiatives among the people, which usually fail to fit into the division between the economic and political spheres (even "added together")? Because we are witnessing more and more mass movements of the people arising by themselves, outside of the trade unions and parties, bringing—or capable of bringing—something indispensable to the struggle. In short, how can we properly respond to the demands and expectations of the masses of the people? In different, negative or positive forms, in a hidden or open manner, objectively or subjectively, the same key questions face us: concerning the State, the trade unions, and those mass movements and initiatives. But as far as answers to these questions are concerned, we have essentially no-one to rely on but ourselves.

They are certainly not new questions. Marxists and revolutionaries have tried in the past to find a way to pose them in critical periods, but they have been forgotten or swept under the carpet. Yet today they are posed on an unprecedented scale, and—what is all-important—they are posed on the scale of the masses, *in practice*, as we are seeing in Italy, Spain and elsewhere. Today we can say: without the mass movement, without the initiatives of the masses, we should not be able to pose these questions openly—questions which because of this movement and of these initiatives have become *burning* political questions. Just as we should be unable to pose them as clearly if the crisis of Marxism had not *exploded.*

A new transformation

Nothing, admittedly, is won in advance, and nothing can be simply changed from one day to the next. The "blockage" of the crisis of Marxism may—beneath more or less "reassuring" appearances—last for a long time yet in this or that party, or in this or that trade union. The important point is not that a few intellectuals, from East or West, should raise a cry of alarm: it might get no response. The important point is that the Labour Movement and the movement of the people, even if it is divided, even if it seems here or there to have reached an impasse, has in fact never been so powerful, so rich in resources and initiatives. The important point is that this movement is beginning, in practice, even at the price of hesitations and severe tests to become conscious of the meaning of the crisis of the International Communist Movement and of the crisis of Marxism: I am talking here about the seriousness of the risks involved, about the depth of the crisis and about the historical opportunity of liberation which it represents. Marxism has in its history passed through a long series of crises and transformations. You only have to think back to the transformation of Marxism following the collapse of the Second International, rallied to the "National Cause". We are now, in the present crisis, faced with a similar transformation, which is already finding its roots in the struggles of the masses. It can bring

(continued on page 227)

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Eurocommunism: a discussion of Carrillo's "Eurocommunism and the State"

Sam Aaronovitch

1. Introduction

Santiago Carrillo took the chance to write this book in 1976 after entering Spain "illegally" in order, as he says, to tackle "one of the most confused and difficult questions confronting a communist today." It is not a major and original contribution to Marxist theory but it is, nevertheless, an important and liberating book written in a simple and direct way.

Part of its importance rests in the fact that the general secretary of an important communist party has written a book which begins to break with past traditions and reflexes in the international communist movement and which gives reasons for a strategy which has attracted to itself the name of Eurocommunism. Of course, that title is not strictly accurate. It is applied to communist parties such as the Japanese which are not European and would be rejected by some communist parties in European countries. Eurocommunism has nevertheless acquired a meaning and Carrillo describes it as "a tendency in the modern progressive and revolutionary movement that is endeavouring to get to grips with the realities of our continent – though in essence it is valid for all developed capitalist countries – and adapt to them the development of the world revolutionary process characteristic of our time."

Carrillo's book is addressed to three sets of people: to the Spanish people generally, to the membership of his own party and to the world communist movement. This has to be borne in mind because it is a conscious political intervention at all these levels.

My intention is not to give a digest of the book but to discuss a number of issues which I think are raised by it in the hope that not only will people read it but also continue the discussion.[1]

2. Can we define the elements of Eurocommunism?

The label assumes there is some common strategic view linking the communist parties described as "Eurocommunist". Carrillo does not give a "bill of contents" but basing myself on his book and on other documents by communist parties and individual communists let me propose this as reasonably summarising this view.

First: the Soviet model of 1917 is an inappropriate one for advanced capitalist societies which have powerful and extensive state structures, developed civil society (i.e. a dense network of social, cultural and political groupings based on voluntary commitment), and considerable democratic traditions and practices.

Second, in such societies, the road to socialism involves the working class, through its organisations, actually developing its own unity and building a series of alliances which put it in a leading (hegemonic) position in all spheres of economic, social and political life thus enabling it to speak for the people as a whole.

Third, the socialist road is inseparable from the fight to broaden and deepen democratic practices and to break the barriers which restrict and distort them in capitalist societies.

Fourth, through popular struggle, advance can be in stages which include changing the balance of forces within the structures of the state (affecting also the organs of coercion) and through a battle of ideas which removes the legitimacy of capitalist exploitation in the minds of the people.

Fifth, a key point in that socialist road is the formation of elected governments, based on popular support, seeking to carry out programmes which make substantial inroads into capitalist economic and political power. Such governments would establish democratic regimes of a new type. These are not yet socialist but represent transitional forms to socialism if the majority of the people are prepared to go further along that path.

Sixth, this approach rules out the idea of one party (such as the CP) having a *monopoly* of working class leadership just as it rules out the idea of a one-party political system as the objective.

Finally, socialism is regarded as inseparably connected with the extension of democracy in all areas of activity.

Carillo provides his own summary in the following words:

[1] Carrillo's book has six chapters: 1. The state versus society; 2. The ideological apparatuses of the state; 3. The coercive apparatuses of the state; 4. The model of democratic socialism; 5. The historical roots of "Eurocommunism"; 6. The dictatorship of the proletariat.

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> "The parties included in the 'Eurocommunist' trend are agreed on the need to advance to socialism with democracy, a multi-party system, parliaments and representative institutions, sovereignty of the people regularly exercised through universal suffrage, trade unions independent of the State and of the parties, freedom for the opposition, human rights, religious freedom, freedom for cultural, scientific and artistic creation, and the development of the broadest forms of popular participation at all levels and in all branches of social activity." (p. 111)

Such an approach offers the *possibility* (not the inevitability and not the certainty) of a road to socialism without civil war.

3. What are the historical roots of Eurocommunism?

I find Carrillo's chapter on this theme one of the most interesting and important parts of his book. He makes the obvious point that these" Eurocommunist" tendencies did not arise overnight, referring to the British Communist Party's *British Road to Socialism* in the fifties, the impact of the 20th Congress of the CPSU (with Khrushev's revelations of the massive crimes committed in the Soviet Union), of the effect of the Sino-Soviet split (on the Japanese Party for instance), of the development of Italian communist thinking especially by Togliatti etc. But he goes back further, to the 1930s. In going into these questions he writes, "a kind of dichotomy is to be seen, dating back to before the Second World War, between, on the one hand, certain of the general ways in which communist parties posed questions – even within what might be called Stalinism, with which many of our ideas were imbued – and, on the other hand, with practice, which strove to get to grips with reality and entered into conflict – sometimes not visible on the surface – with the ways in which those questtions were posed." (p.113).

He then suggests that we may need to re-examine the history of the Popular Front in theory and practice. He refers to differences between the Comintern and Maurice Thorrez (leader of the French Communist Party) where Thorez favoured taking part in the French Popular Front government and the Comintern opposed this. Carrillo writes that this was not a difference of secondary importance but a basic question concerning the scope and content of the Popular Front. He argues:

> "It is not much use speculating after the event on what might have happened if Thorez had got his way; but it is reasonable to suppose that in that event the French Popular Front would have been something different from what it was and that its ability to pursue a more resolute anti-fascist policy would have influenced the situation in Europe and probably in Spain." (p. 114)

He then goes on to discuss the experience of the Spanish Popular Front and the Civil War of which, of course, he had unique experience. However, I do not propose to give a digest of the chapter. What Carrillo is beginning to argue but does not develop is, in my view, a much broader and more radical thesis.

The Soviet model of revolution was inappropriate for advanced capitalist countries *at any time*. The Communist International, dominated by the CPSU, time and again got its perspectives wrong and intervened damagingly in the affairs of the individual communist parties and, one supposes, in the affairs of the British communist party as well.

Again and again, the requirements of the Soviet state were substituted for the fraternal relationships of communist parties.

The Seventh Congress of the CI in 1935 marked a major advance but even then, as Carrillo's comments suggest, CI intervention made it more difficult for the communist parties of France and Spain for instance, to work out their best strategy.

In Britain, in the very year of the Seventh Congress and of Dimitrov's classic statement, the Party Congress adopted its programme *For a Soviet Britain*, itself in conflict with the essence of Dimitrov's approach.

All this leads me to the view that it is wrong to consider Eurocommunism as solely the product of the post-war world. We have been in the habit, for instance, of arguing that the *British Road to Socialism* as we have developed it, could only have meaning as a result of the major changes in the world balance of strength brought about by the war and its consequences. Certainly, such changes have been immense, but the experience of the 1930s shows that such programmes were conceivable then and would have been important if the communist parties had felt freer to develop strategies which accorded with their own conditions.

We have been using an argument which, in my opinion, has prevented us from coming to terms with the truth about our own history and that of the international communist and working class movement. It is hardly surprising that in discussing the historical roots of Eurocommunism, Carrillo does so in a chapter which concerns itself very much with the Comintern and then the Cominform (which was created after the war).

The dissolution of the CI during the war, the experiences of the war itself and the role in that war of such communist parties as those of France and Italy, accelerated a process of independent strategy that was already under way. But, in making an historical re-evaluation, can the matter stop there? If the Comintern and later the Cominform was often wrong, and if therefore the political line and practice of communist parties was often wrong, what then of the judgments which communists made of social-

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ist and social democratic trends in the inter-war years and even later? Did we not help to produce *their* errors and obscure the positive elements that existed amongst them? The question must at least be asked if only because of the problem Carrillo comes back to again and again, namely the relationship of communist parties with the Soviet Union.

4. Carrillo and the nature of the state

Carrillo's ideas on the state are amongst those which need careful and critical examination.

He stands by what might be regarded as the most orthodox of positions in arguing that even in the most democratic bourgeois societies, the state is the organised power of one class; that the state has become the instrument of one group of capitalists, the monopoly capitalists against the rest of capital as well as against the rest of society; the state, he asserts is becoming "less and less a *state for all* and more and more a *state for the few*." (p.25).

But he then argues that the contradiction between society and the state, "given the present dimensions and features of the state apparatus, can and must culminate in a crisis within that apparatus, the members of which mostly have their origins in the underprivileged classes and are really in a similar class situation, and who, constituting as they do a mass force, cannot be separated off like the army and the police in barracks bristling with defences and isolated from the rest of society." (pp25-26).

Carrillo attaches the greatest importance to what he calls the "ideological apparatuses of the state" (following the view of Althusser), which include, in his view, religious institutions, the educational system, the family, as well as the judicial apparatus, the political apparatus (presumably including political parties? SA); and the apparatuses of information (press, radio, television etc.) and of culture. (p.20).

He argues that a growing crisis affects this vast ideological apparatus and that the socialist forces through determined, resolute and intelligent struggle could turn the weapon of ideology, the ideological apparatuses, against the classes which are in power (p.45).

The developing struggle to transform the state apparatus by democratising it will find its reflection in the coercive apparatus. He refers to developments amongst the police and army in France, Italy and Holland for instance. His chapter on "The Coercive Apparatuses of the State" contains an attempt to present arguments directed at elements in the Spanish police and army as to what the role of such forces should be in democratic Spain, seeking to express the tensions which must exist in the police and armed forces within his country (as in others).

Carrillo then asks whether a democratic transformation of the military mentality can be attained as a result of a social crisis, due to factors other than war. He answers:

> "definitely, the forces of change in developed capitalist countries can only try to win over or neutralise the greater part if not the whole of the army by other than traditional means. This requires a drastic revision of the attitude of the forces of change towards the military apparatus, a new approach to the whole question, capable of accepting certain characteristics of the military mentality and of extending and deepening within it the objective effects of the present crisis in society".

He goes on to argue that the

> "old anti-militaristic attitudes, pure political agitation, a negative approach to the army, would not facilitate the task but would make it impossible and would help the ruling oligarchy to form a bloc with the army". (p. 65)

Carrillo raises powerful and important points and his discussion of the army is exceptionally interesting. But I find myself with questions and reservations which space allows me to present only very baldly. In the first place, by taking over the idea of "ideological apparatuses of the state" including the family, religion, culture etc., Carrillo has, in my view, confused matters in two different ways. In one way, by extending the state to cover virtually every institution in society he converts it into an all-pervading essence so that it loses its distinctive character. In another way, he cannot see that many of the institutions he discusses, such as the education system (in the UK for instance) and also the political party system (as it functions in parliament) straddles both civil society (the sphere of voluntary organisation) and the apparatus of state.

In addition, it is debatable whether the state can be treated as simply the instrument of one class or even a fraction of a class. This latter approach comes very close to the earlier primitive definitions of state monopoly capitalism as the fusion of the monopolies and the state.

It is much harder to accept Carrillo's picture of the possibility of democratic transformation of the state from within as well as from without if the class nature of the state is defined in this narrow way.

The idea of democratic transformation of the state is of course connected with the idea of the transition to socialism.

5. What kind of strategy? The problems of transition

As we know from our own prolonged discussions on *The British Road to Socialism* going back to 1951, it is the strategy of the transition which is the most complex problem of all. Not surprisingly, it is the area which Carrillo also finds difficulty in exploring effectively. This is partly because the very act of formulating a strategy is a political act designed to

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help change the situation in the period in which it is presented; and also because the future can never be known; in politics, the unexpected plays an exceptionally important role as the events of May 1968 demonstrated to both the French and Italian communist parties.

In many ways Carrillo's book is discursive and not well organised. A large part of the discussion on problems of transition is however to be found in his chapter on "The Model of Democratic Socialism".

The fact that the chapter has this title itself creates some confusion as to whether Carrillo really does envisage some stage resulting from the assertion of the "anti-monopoly socialist forces" as he calls them, and before the establishment of state power directly and consciously used for the construction of a socialist society. However, in discussing his economic programme with which the chapter starts, he says that his model presupposes "the long-term coexistence of public and private forms of property . . .; in this stage *which is not yet socialism, but which is also no longer the domination of the State by monopoly capital* . . ." (p.77). After discussing this for two or three pages, Carrillo then writes:

> "This system, which will still be economically mixed, will translate itself into a political regime in which the owners will be able to organise themselves not only economically but also in a political party or parties representative of their interests; this will be one of the component parts of political and ideological pluralism. . . . The overcoming of social differences will follow a natural process and will not be the result of coercive measures but of the development of the productive forces and of the social services, so that through a gradual process, encouraged by education, all sections of the population will be integrating themselves in the social collective." (p.80).

Political parties are presented here as reflections of positions of ownership but pluralism will involve parties which base themselves on ideologies and combinations of ideologies not necessarily reflecting the kind of ownership situation in which its founders find themselves. This is a very "reductionist" view which cannot be maintained. And it also appears to disregard the evolution of existing political parties and tendencies.

Again, the reference to "natural process" fills me with some disquiet. Transitional stages cannot but involve considerable tension and struggle. There is no sense in which, in such a stage, a consensus can "naturally" appear as Chilean experience has shown only too plainly. Such formulations can only accentuate the readers feeling of vagueness and lack of careful analysis.

This unease is increased because Carrillo a little later makes it clear that the communist party in such a process does not seek a position of dominance in the state and society or to have a monopoly of power but "aspires to a power in which different political groups representing these forces (of culture and labour, SA) take part and cooperate, according to their real weight, in emulation for progress, socialism and democracy." (p.101).

Sometimes, the problem we are discussing is referred to as that of the transition to the transition to socialism! Obviously this has always occupied revolutionaries. Laclau, for instance, in his book *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* quotes Gramsci in 1924 being concerned at what he regarded as the incorrect position of the PCI in rejecting the idea of a Constituent Assembly and proposing the idea of Soviets. Gramsci asks

> "Is it likely that the slogan of the Constituent Assembly will become current again? If it is, what should be our position on this? Briefly, the present situation must have a political solution. What is the most probable form that such a solution will take? Is it possible to think that we shall pass from fascism to the dictatorship of the proletariat? What intermediate phases are likely or probable? I think that in the crisis the country is going through, the party which has the advantage will be one which best understands this necessary process of transition."

Critics of Carrillo

One way of approaching the problems involved in even theorising about the nature of a transition is to refer to two sets of criticisms made of Carrillo, one directly by Claudin in his book, *Eurocommunism and Socialism*, and one indirectly by Andre Gunder Frank in a review of Claudin's book in *New Left Review* March/April 1978. Claudin, who was a leading figure in the Spanish Communist Party until expelled in 1964, presents a very sympathetic view of Eurocommunism but he has some important criticisms of Carrillo's approach. He considers that a phase involving a critical attack on monopoly capitalism can only be a "period of uncertain struggle, during which monopoly capital, though badly beaten remains undefeated. That implies a period of the most acute class conflict, since the defeat of monopoly capital would signal the inception of a process which would see the elimination of capitalism altogether and the start of the socialist transition."

Claudin's verdict is very stark:

> "It is therefore unrealistic to conceive of any 'advanced democracy' providing a long period of 'democratic stability'. It is equally illusory to look for any *stable* alliance with the *entire* non-monopoly bourgeoisie or with any political representatives of any fraction of monopoly capital . . .". (p. 107)

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Claudin is highly critical of a predominantly gradualist tactic "essentially centred on the political arena, especially on elections, and which subordinates all forms of mass action and social struggle to a quest for alliances with one or several fractions of the bourgeoisie (and we must not forget that the non-monopoly bourgeoisie comprises the greater part of the bourgeoisie and is responsible for the exploitation of the greater part of the working class)". In his view, the deep structural crisis of present day capitalism leaves little time; time is short, he insists. Claudin represents what some have called "left" Eurocommunism compared with "right" Eurocommunism represented by Carrillo.

A criticism which embraces both Carrillo and Claudin comes from Andre Gunder Frank.

Like Claudin he dismisses the idea that monopoly is "a kind of benign tumour which can be cut out of the economic system, rendering the patient more competitive and healthy". He reinforces the argument that the gradualist approach permits the mobilisation and organisation of counter-revolution. He then demands an answer to the question that if the crisis is severe "why *must* there be space for a realistic intermediate policy, especially if the crisis does not allow for much time to discover it and put it in train?" Frank believes that Eurocommunism will never pose the key question of state power.

I have presented these criticisms of Carrillo at some length because they raise some of the important questions for discussion.

Four Comments

But I have four points I would like to make by way of comment.

First, the label of Eurocommunism is in danger of obscuring the major *differences* between the countries concerned. The Italian party's vision of the "historic compromise" takes into account among other things the peculiar features of the Christian Democratic Party with its substantial left. There is little comparison in terms of existing political structure with the situation in the UK for instance; and the differences between Spain and France are profound. The lines of strategy have to be very broadly defined indeed if they are to embrace these different sets of conditions. The temptation to set up new models(e.g. that of the PCI) needs to be resisted if new blunders are not to be perpetrated.

Second, the idea of advancing working class hegemony, precisely because of differing conditions, has to be worked out in very concrete terms for each country. Carrillo, it seems to me, makes only a very limited contribution, but it affects for instance the actual proposals around which alliances are to be constructed.

The organisations of the working class for instance, cannot go into an alliance saying that they must get everything they want or else no agreement is possible. But the nature of the compromise must vary between countries and, within countries, must change over time according to very subtle balances in economic and political conditions.

Third, the view of the anti-monopoly alliance by Claudin is unnecessarily restrictive. Carrillo's conception of the bloc of labour and culture with its positive objectives is much nearer the approach of the broad democratic alliance made in the *British Road to Socialism*. Such a concept also recognises that class analysis does not exhaust the character of movements which must be combined in a broad democratic alliance, most notably the movement of women and the movement to meet national aspirations.

But the development of such a broad democratic alliance – together with its aims – should not be equated with agreement on undertaking a socialist transformation. This is to make an unwarranted leap and appears to impose on the broad democratic alliance the view of one section which is now seeking to construct it.

This point leads to my fourth point: the criticism of so-called "gradualism". I believe it is true that in our discussions on the road to socialism the nature of capitalist resistance and sabotage is inadequately discussed. One has only to read in recent issues of the *Sunday Times* of the combined pressure of the IMF and the US Treasury upon a right-wing Labour government to imagine the reaction to even modest advances along the British Road to Socialism!

Political Conditions

But I think the critics of Carrillo are nevertheless missing the point. Yes, it is true that there is a serious crisis of world capitalism. But to argue that this means there is little time to create some space for developing the broad democratic alliance and that therefore, by implication, as seems to be Frank's position, the communist parties should swiftly launch a struggle for state power is illogical. How can a struggle for state power succeed if the *political* conditions are not present and if that very approach would precipitate the worst kind of authoritarian reaction which could set back the working class movement for decades?

The recent elections in France, Portugal, Spain, and Greece with the almost spectacular rise of varied socialist parties (as well as the results of the recent local elections in Italy) show that this kind of impatience is not a substitute for a strategy which can develop the political conditions for revolutionary change.

In spite of continuous political crises, threats of military coups, American intervention at various

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levels, the PCI has demonstrated an ability to push forward the boundaries of working class and popular strength. This has made it *harder* for Italian capitalism to reverse the process and affects the ability of big business to use external pressure (though they will certainly do so).

Nevertheless, the development of the strategy broadly defined as Eurocommunism does carry with it the danger of a swing to the right in style and policy which can weaken the connections of the communist parties with the masses and especially the large mass of rejected and alienated people in the big urban centres. This can be seen in Italy, amongst the youth especially. In France the formal unity of the socialist and communist parties was inadequately buttressed by a grass roots movement.

The development of the movement "from below" is sometimes extended to the notion of new popular organs which represent working class and popular power as against those of the state. There is, however, a distinction to be drawn between *state* power and the power that the organisations of a class which does not yet have state power can exert. The idea of constructing a *dual* system of power parallel with both the representative organs of Parliament and Local Authority and the existing organisations of the labour movement is not a strategy consistent with the Eurocommunist approach. But popular movements can grow up which must have their autonomy encouraged, not suppressed or distrusted.

6. The nature of socialism and the characterisation of the Soviet Union

Carrillo criticises Lenin for underestimating and belittling the generic concept of democracy by identifying it with the state. Socialism and democracy are regarded as inseparable and the critique of the Soviet Union, whilst recognising its important achievements goes much further than, for instance, Gollan in the article in which he initiated the discussion on socialist democracy in *Marxism Today*.

Carrillo's view is that "the October Revolution has produced a state which is evidently not a bourgeois state, but neither is it as yet the proletariat organised as the ruling class, or a genuine workers democracy."

In trying to define the nature of state power in the Soviet Union he later suggests that "the question is whether the State, which is no longer capitalist, is not an intermediate phase between the capitalist and the genuine socialist state, in the same way as the absolute monarchies were an intermediate phase between feudalism and modern capitalist parliamentary democracies; a phase which through analysis of its characteristics and functions, would enable a more objective and scientific explanation to be given of the Stalin phenomenon and others like it." (pp.164/5).

Monty Johnstone (*Socialist Europe*, No. 3, p.27) criticises Carrillo and argues that a more useful approach is to ask on behalf of which class, essentially and historically, does the ruling bureaucratic stratum operate in the Soviet Union and answers that it can only be the Soviet working class. This is a discussion which has hardly began.

Not surprisingly, Carrillo's book has been reviewed with great hostility in the Soviet press, though no Russian edition has been published there which would enable the people of the Soviet Union to evaluate Carrillo's arguments. There seems to me to be substance in Claudin's view that the Soviet Party's hostility to Carrillo partly stems from its fear that if this view became widespread among communist parties, it would represent a withdrawal from the CPSU of its "legitimacy" in the eyes of Soviet communists and sympathisers and have powerful internal repercussions.

The exploration of Carrillo's analysis is complicated by the fact that the French and Italian communist parties ,for instance, are close to becoming parties of government which would involve them in negotiations with the Soviet state as such. Whether such a constraint operates or not, the Marxist analysis of the socialist countries remains an important task for Marxist parties everywhere which can only help them in their struggle for socialism. Carrillo has left the matter still in a confused state (which he recognises).

7. Concluding points

The issues raised in this article far from exhaust the problems posed and discussed by Carrillo. I have said very little about his views on the role of the communist party and on pluralism. He also brings out into the open the lack of an agreed international policy by the communist parties of Western Europe on such matters as the Common Market, nuclear defence etc. But I hope that Carrillo's book will be read and discussed as part of the wide-ranging review and political re-evaluation taking place in the world communist movement and that democratic debate will join with political practice.

Louis Althusser, The Crisis of Marxism

(continued from page 220)

about the renewal of Marxism, give new force to its theory, modify its ideology, its organisations and its practices, opening up a real future of social, political and cultural revolution for the working class and for all working people.

No-one will claim that the task is not extremely difficult: but the essential point is that, in spite of all the difficulties which it involves, *it is possible.*

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The Development of the Women's Movement

Frankie Rickford

(The author is active in the women's movement in Bristol and is a member of the West of England District Committee of the Communist Party[1]*).*

> "The struggle for women's liberation is a central political question for the working class. The emancipation of women is an important goal in itself. In addition, unless women are involved in the overall struggle for socialism . . . the possibilities of developing working class unity and the broad democratic alliance will be greatly diminished. Thus the fight for women's liberation is an integral part of the struggle for socialism, and needs to be taken up by the whole labour movement." (*British Road to Socialism* p 29)

In its new programme, the Communist Party has committed itself to supporting the struggle for women's liberation, and advocates a political alliance between the Women's Liberation Movement and other social forces, particularly the labour movement, as part of its strategy for socialism.

In order to build such an alliance, we need to fully understand its implications. As it has evolved, the Women's Liberation Movement has posed profound challenges to the political and theoretical traditions of the left, many of which have hardly begun to filter through.

The Women's Liberation Movement emerged in recognition that women constitute a distinct social group, whose history and contemporary social condition cannot be explained solely by reference to the struggle between classes: the Marxist theoretical tradition failed adequately to account either for women's different relation from men to class oppression, or for the social relationship *between* men and women. The disjuncture between the experience of women and the analyses of society available from within the left has generated many attempts by feminists to theorise women's relation to class and to men.[2]

Two significant debates have taken place around the economics of housework and the place of women in the labour process. They both raise the question of the position of women vis-a-vis men within the family and within the workforce, and provide theoretical insights into the reasons for women's need to establish the autonomous political practice which the article goes on to describe.

Women's oppression and the family

Feminists have generally identified the basis of men's domination of women in contemporary capitalist society in the sexual division of labour within the family—woman as the domestic servicer and the emotional and physical nurturer of her husband and children, and man as the breadwinner, the active, instrumental figure for whom the family provides refuge from the world of work. The sexual division of labour and the relation of power and subordination between men and women are inscribed in and sustaining of the capitalist economy and social formation. But they predate capitalism and cut across all classes. The Political Economy of Women Group[3] has shown how women's unwaged domestic labour in the family contributes to the reproduction of labour power for capital (few workers earn enough to enable them to always eat in restaurants or to live in hotels). But they have also shown that within the capitalist class there are conflicting interests in relation to the socialisation of domestic labour (e.g. many industries rely on the availability

[1] These people contributed to the article with helpful suggestions and criticism while it was being written: Wendy Holloway, Caroline Rowan, Betty Underwood, Bea Campbell, Jackie West, Jenny Owen, Jane Hawksley, Alison Wylie, Sarah Benton, Angie Weir, Phil Langton, Linda Ward.

It relies throughout on ideas—usually unaccredited—developed by many other women, especially contributors to recent issues of *Red Rag*.

[2] Some important examples, not referred to in this article are: Selma James, *Sex, Race and Class*, Falling Wall Press. Christine Delphy, *The Main Enemy: a materialist analysis of women's oppression*, Women's Research and Resources Centre 1977.

[3] Conference of Socialist Economists, "Women's Domestic Labour", in *On the Political Economy of Women*. CSE pamphlet No. 2.

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of female wage labour, (see below). Further, many of the functions performed by women for men within the family could not be translated into commodities or state provided services, and if the provision of nurseries, launderies and cheap restaurants were to be extended, the sexual division of labour would not necessarily be eliminated. Without profound ideological changes in society, they would undoubtedly employ mainly women. Some important points to draw from this analysis are:—

i) Women's relationship to the means of production, in their role as housewives, is crucially different from that of their husbands', so women's class position cannot be defined by that of the men they live with.[4]

ii) The economic influences of the family under capitalism are dynamic and complex. To reduce women's oppression within it to a simple expression of capitalist interests ignores this.

iii) While men enjoy economic power over women, and a range of privileged services from women because of the sexual division of labour in the family, men's interests are at stake too. As well as looking at the relation of the family to capitalist production in discussing women and class, we have to take account of men's relative power over women within it.

iv) Ideology, which constructs men and women into different kinds of people, with different expectations and acquired areas of confidence and skill, acts as a determining force in maintaining the sexual division of labour and women's subordination to men.

Women and men in the labour process

The accumulation and concentration of ownership of capital which has characterised the development of monopoly capitalism has relied on the availability of an unskilled and flexible workforce employed in low-paid detail work. Sarah Benton[5] and Veronica Beechey[6] have shown that the social division of labour between skilled and unskilled workers is largely a sexual division of labour. Women, especially women employed part-time, constitute the bulk of the increase in the labour force since the war. Women's vulnerable position as wage earners derives from their family responsibilities, from assumptions about their dependence on men, and from notions of women's "natural" aptitudes and limitations which also correspond to their family role.[7] It has also been suggested that employers have only been able to proceed in de-skilling manual work because the trade union movement, whose tradition was created by skilled male workers, has allowed it. "It has been possible for employers, both state and private, to employ women on terms that would be unacceptable inside that union tradition, because it hasn't involved any threat to male privilege."[8]

We must emphasise thus, that if there is to be significant political substance to the fact that we are all exploited by capital, it has to be constructed and not assumed. Sexism, the pursuit and defence of male privilege, has been a constant and forceful influence in the history of the conduct of class struggle. It's consequences are manifest in men's and women's diverging life-experience in education, at work, on the streets, in the family, in organised politics, and in their respective relationships to culture, language, the state, and sex, among other things.

Consciousness Raising

The process of consciousness-raising has always been, and remains, a central feature of feminist political practice. The Women's Liberation Movement has had to discover what was invisible to the left—the extent and depth of the difference between men's and women's social experience. The contradictions in women's lives, previously felt as individual frustration, guilt, isolation, and confusion, through consciousness raising became a series of revelations about women's condition in society.

Classically, this involved small groups of women meeting regularly to explore their perceptions about themselves, their relationships, their work, their individual histories. Expectations of domestic fulfilment conflicted with the actual nature and social status of housework; the characteristics required of us by the ideology of femininity (gentleness and grace) barred us from being taken seriously at work and elsewhere; when we did become assertive or angry we were humiliated for our "hysteria"; the "sexual revolution" which was supposed to have liberated us all left many women feeling inadequate and exhausted in their attempts to become ever more imaginative, lascivious and responsive sex-objects. The list of contradictions is endless. Exposing them is a means of collectivising, bit by bit, how we are oppressed.

Consciousness-raising also encourages and facilitates the process of changing. The personal characteristics required of women by the sexual division of

[4] See also Lee Comer "The Question of Women and Class." *Catcall* No. 6.

[5] Sarah Benton. "A Profitable Business." *Link* No. 19.

[6] Veronica Beechey "Some Notes on Female Wage Labour." *Capital and Class*. No. 3.

[7] Professional women are also concentrated in relatively poorly-paid, low status areas, e.g., social work, teaching, nursing, which again correspond to women's role in the family.

[8] Sarah Benton, *op. cit.*

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labour are part of us, and themselves militate against our becoming *politically* competent: the effects of our oppression on our consciousnesses themselves contribute to the perpetuation of our condition. The impotence, the preoccupation, the self-contempt—functions of the contradictions of femininity—once they were recognised as such became objects of struggle as much as did the expectation of femininity from others.

Sisterhood

Closely related in its political significance to consciousness-raising has been the growth of a feminist sub-culture. The notion of sisterhood, the support and solidarity between women, expresses our need to overcome our isolation from one another and our dependency for a sense of self-worth on being adequately feminine in relation to men. This does not necessarily imply a withdrawal from men. But it has enabled us to begin to construct new definitions of womanhood, and to redefine the terms on which our relationships with men were based. Personal autonomy, the refusal to judge ourselves according to the stereotypes of femininity imposed by sexist culture required that we cultivate alternative values which compensate for the consequences of rejecting those stereotypes.

Mutual validation and reassurance could never of itself provide a strategy for overcoming oppression, but it has been crucial in enabling us to survive and sustain confidence as a movement in a society where women only moved in response to men. (It is worth making the point that the tradition of fraternity and comradeship in the labour movement and on the revolutionary left has also provided a source of validation to its militants. But women relate uncomfortably to the spirit of comradeship, with the celebration of aggressively masculine heroics that it has historically expressed.)

Campaigning

The obvious campaigning priorities for the movement as they are expressed in its early demands have been the achievement of provisions that women need to enable them to become socially active people in the way that is taken as given for men. Other campaigns, such as those against rape and violence against women, are not primarily directed at the state but address more general manifestations of women's oppression.

Campaigning activity in the women's movement relies mainly on the initiative of local women's groups, and although some campaigns have now become centrally organised, many feminists feel that they have lost energy and effectiveness by doing so.[9]

In many towns, women's centres have been set up to provide a meeting place for groups, and are often available during the day to offer information and support on a wide range of issues to local women. Campaign groups, too, frequently provide services to women in the community; free on the spot pregnancy tests, refuges for battered women, emotional support and legal and medical information for raped women, playgroups, food and housing co-ops.

As well as fighting for more resources, these campaigns insisted that the *content* of what was provided could be determined by sexist assumptions. For example, pregnancy tests *are* available within the health service, but they often involve long delays, and impatient or moralistic attitudes from doctors. Women's urgency to know whether or not they are pregnant is not recognised as valid within a male-defined culture.

Women's Aid refuges have made public a form of violence which until recently was ignored or treated as a normal and inevitable part of married life. The recent Domestic Violence Act and the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act which obliges local authorities to recognise battered women as homeless, are both the direct result of the Women's Aid campaign's challenge to men's right to beat their wives. Rather than concentrating on propagandist politics, the campaign has consistently been based around setting up refuges, and running them in a way which refused to treat the women in them as social casualties. There are no wardens in Women's Aid refuges; decisions are taken at house meetings of the women themselves with a feminist support group. There is no question of pressurising a woman to return to a relationship in which she was battered; the emphasis is on enabling her to develop the confidence to take her own decisions.

As well as using traditional public campaigning tactics like marches and leafletting, feminists have also innovated. They have occupied cathedrals to draw attention to restrictive abortion bills, they have disrupted beauty contests to protest at the objectification of women, and they have reclaimed the night-crowding torchlit through city areas where women dare not walk alone, singing and plastering sexist hoardings with "This insults and degrades women" stickers. They have organised festivals and street

[9] The National Abortion Campaign is seen by some women as no longer part of the movement—not only because it involves men, but because of its organisational structure, with a central steering committee, and its single issue, parliamentary orientation. It has been argued by NAC activists that this structure and approach was demanded by the conditions in which the campaign was formed—the threat of the James White Abortion (Amendment) Bill restricting women's already very limited abortion rights. Most NAC activists are feminists, and feel that the campaign has not lost its feminist perspective, as it has sometimes been accused of doing.

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theatre, set up displays and exhibitions and shown video films in shopping centres. And they have run teach-ins on college campuses, and public speak-outs about abortion and rape.

Local Structure

Both consciousness raising and locally-based campaigning groups emphasise participation and resist hierarchies. In the women's movement there are no administrative paths to be taken. The only way of influencing the politics of the movement is to convince other women of the value of whatever it is, and persuade them to invest their time and energy in pursuing it. This rejection of a structure which imposes directives from above, and the insistence on *sharing* skills and expertise, have been persistent features of our practice.

It is important to note that although the Women's Liberation Movement does not have a formal, democratic centralist structure, it does have mechanisms for taking decisions and co-ordinating activity at a local level. In Bristol we have monthly policy meetings, open to all women and usually well attended, where we discuss issues—pertinent to the local movement and to the women's centre—which require collective decisions. Decisions about, for example, making donations to campaigns, strikes, etc., or writing letters from the women's centre to the local press, are usually unanimous. Sometimes more contentious issues like the involvement of men on an International Women's Day march, or our relationship to the local Wages for Housework group have required that a vote is taken, but always after exhaustive discussion. We also have monthly general meetings where a more explicitly political discussion is introduced by someone on a particular subject. Both these and the policy meetings provide an opportunity for women from different campaigns, women's centre workers, and members of consciousness-raising groups to meet and collectively determine the direction of the local movement.

A Movement for All Women?

The Women's Liberation Movement is not immune from the general problems which beset any attempt to organise women politically. The limitations imposed on women's time and energy by their responsibilities as wives and mothers are compounded by the personal characteristics required of them by those roles which of course hold true for women who are not actually wives and mothers. When you perceive the central feature of your life's purpose to be to meet the physical and emotional needs of others, you do not easily gain the confidence to engage in political action on your own behalf. No movement has been able to mobilise working class women on a mass scale. Most have refused to recognise the social and material circumstances which contribute to the oppression of women as a sex, and so have failed to take up issues which speak to the needs of women. Inevitably it has been those women *most able* to engage in struggle, because of the circumstances of their lives, who have done so historically. To chastise or dismiss the women's movement because those active in it do not represent the *most* oppressed or the *most* exploited women, ignores this enduring problem which has confronted all movements and which derives from the very condition that Women's Liberation addresses.

However, that question, how to make the movement relevant to, and involve different sections of women has been a constant needle in our conscience. It represents part of a more general problem facing the movement which concerns its mechanisms for impinging on the world outside itself, and ultimately of achieving its goals.

The content and direction of the movement's political action is determined by the women involved in it. In the absence of any committees, delegates or system of representation, to participate at all you must participate physically and consistently. The degree of commitment in time and energy involved immediately presents problems for women who are, for example, the mothers of small children. (Creches are provided more consistently at feminist events, of course, than anywhere else. There is a far higher level of awareness in the women's movement of the need to compensate and allow for the domestic problems faced by women than in any other organisation.)

At the same time the movement has required of itself that it respond to the condition of all women, and identifies its membership as consisting of all women who support its aims.[10] (Indeed, all women's lives have changed through the growth of the movement, and thousands who have never been near a feminist meeting relate to what it is saying.)

I have argued that the presence of a sub-culture in the movement is not incidental but serves a crucial political purpose. However, even when that sub-culture remains self-conscious about its limitations, it poses problems for the involvement of certain groups of women. Its characteristics are those of the women who created it, and for that reason not all women will fit comfortably into it, even though they may identify with the goals of feminism. Their age, their job, where they live or the cultural consequences of their class position may cause them to feel barred from the movement because of the distinctive atmosphere it has evolved within itself.

That general problem has sometimes in some places been compounded by an absorption with and collapse into the social life of the movement. This "retreat to cultural feminism" has been documented

[10] Women's Liberation: an introduction. *Wires*, 1976.

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and criticised by many women throughout the movement, but it still seems that the connections are not always made between our enchantment with the movement of women—due to the discovery that we are not unique and alone in our frustration—and the need to reach beyond the movement through action.

The Politics of Separatism

The influence of separatist women has sometimes contributed a political rationale to this evading of the world outside the movement. For them it represented a self-conscious refusal to communicate with the men who partially populate it. The vision of separatism is a society without men. Separatists have argued that everything that oppresses every woman is explainable by the physical existence of men, and that while men are still around the appropriate place for women is as far away from them as possible. Occasionally separatist groups have progressed (or regressed) beyond proposing that we ignore men. In the last eighteen months, a group of separatists called Revolutionary Feminists have emerged who suggest a militant strategy of making war on men. Since the national Women's Liberation conference in Birmingham this year the group seems to have fragmented, following its political isolation at the conference and the widespread criticism levelled at its most vocal representatives for their aggressive behaviour there.

Historically, the most damaging consequence of the influence of separatist politics in the women's movement has been its implicit or explicit rejection of women who retain personal or political connections with men. (Separatism does not take account of any significant divisions in society other than that between men and women, so it sees no value in feminists working in movements which involve men—especially in political parties.[11]) A London based group of explicitly non-separatist lesbians, the Lesbian Left, has weakened the claim made by separatist women to represent lesbians in the women's movement. Along with other lesbians, the Lesbian Left, has also firmly rejected the notion expressed by some separatists, that somehow lesbians are better feminists than heterosexual women.

The Socialist Feminist Current

The Women's Liberation Movement is "anti-capitalist" in its atmosphere and approach and Marxism has been an important reference point for developing feminist theory. At the same time the movement has always been highly suspicious of left groups and parties. An organised Socialist Feminist Current has developed over the last two years, with a network of local groups and a journal, *Scarlet Woman*. Its first national conference in Manchester this year was attended by a thousand women, and unlike previous conferences of women and socialism, it was not primarily a weekend of debate and dissent between representatives of left organisations. The current has arisen from a need felt by many women in the movement to synthesise socialism and feminism as theory and practice. Most women involved are unaligned and many have rejected the various available left groups and parties from a position of well informed dissatisfaction with their political traditions, and a pessimism about the possibility of working in them effectively as feminists.

Socialist feminism has challenged the economism of the British Marxist tradition with its consequent over-emphasis on workplace struggle and its refusal to recognise that the sexual division of labour and the organisation and conduct of our personal lives and relationships, are central political issues. Economistic socialist theories do not account for the effects on consciousness of a class, race and sex divided society, nor do they see the necessity of transforming consciousness as part of the revolutionary process. The notion of a vanguard party to lead the passive masses into struggle is also inimicable to feminism. The women's movement emphasises active participation in changing social conditions, and it opposes hierarchical structures, because it poses the overcoming of inertia and feebleness as intrinsic to the overcoming of oppression.

Some women have felt anxious about the Socialist Feminist Current too readily dividing the movement into tendencies. Consolidating as a current could mean that the contribution of an evolving socialist feminist theory to the wider women's movement is weakened, and debate about the direction of the movement avoided. But the intention of most of the women involved seems precisely the opposite. The discussions at the Manchester conference ranged

[11] It is important to distinguish separatism from radical feminism, although most separatists have identified themselves as radical feminists. The label of radical feminist has been used by groups with many different political positions and the contribution made by some radical feminists to the women's movement has been very positive. It is radical feminists who in the US have provided the most solid objection to reformism in the movement, and continue to insist that Equal Rights Amendments are not the end of the story for women's liberation. In Britain, radical feminists insisted that women's liberation was about the condition of women as a sex, in the face of attempts by some women on the left to collapse the politics of feminism into slogans about class struggle. Radical feminists, including Revolutionary Feminists, have also been instrumental in forcing socialist feminists to recognise the implications of acknowledging the specificity of women's oppression. The issue of rape would almost certainly not have been taken up as seriously and energetically in the movement if it hadn't been for their influence.

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from rape to reproduction and women in Soweto; *Scarlet Woman* has published papers written from widely diverging political perspectives on issues of interest to all feminists. While its identity is lodged confidently within, as part of, the Women's Liberation Movement, it clearly represents a positive development there. And its exploration of the problems of creating a comprehensive revolutionary politics potentially offers an important theoretical contribution to the whole socialist movement.

Communicating feminism

So far I have discussed the Women's Liberation Movement in terms of its theory of politics and of specific elements of its political practice, and have described some historic limitations of its potential for expanding the social basis of its activists. The final section of the article raises the question of the movement's mechanisms for representing itself to and impinging on, the world outside itself. It is important that feminists confront this problem for two reasons. The first relates to the various forms of exclusivity of the movement, which I have outlined above, and our need to reach all women although we cannot "recruit" them. The second concerns men; women's liberation cannot be achieved simply through changes in economic and social provisions. Central to our politics is a critique of male dominance—of men's way of being men and their response to women. To convey that critique to men (men as a social group rather than individuals we happen to know) so as to enable them to comprehend it—to identify the contradictions they themselves experience in relation to sexism—requires communication between the autonomous women's movement and political structures outside it.

As well as ongoing local activity, we have conferences: conferences on particular issues (e.g. on sexuality, on sexism in education, on women's aid); conferences for particular sorts of feminists (e.g. Revolutionary Feminist conferences, Socialist Feminist conferences, lesbian conferences, etc.), and regional conferences.

The National Women's Liberation conferences, which have been held every year since 1970, provide opportunities to discuss all or most of the same subjects, if not in such depth. In the past they have also included practical workshops—on self defence, car maintenance, massage, etc. But the national conferences carry an added significance. They include a plenary session where we take decisions as the Women's Liberation Movement. They provide the only opportunity we have for doing this, but do not enable us to do it confidently enough to produce an adequate expression of the movement's politics.

Our national conferences are not, and could not be of the same nature as Party or Trade Union congresses. We have a philosophy which forbids any woman to claim she represents other women. We know that only a small minority of those present are going to speak at the microphone, and feel ambivalent about a situation in which all but the most confident of us will be unrepresented. So debates at these plenaries occur in an atmosphere of unease from the start. We have a tradition of decision-taking in our groups which relies on consensus rather than majority opinion, and most women feel that vote-taking is an inappropriate procedure in the women's movement. We have an indeterminate membership and hugely varying levels of identification with and participation in the movement so the criterion of being in the right place at the right time seems an unsatisfactory way of determining a women's right to participate in the national decision-making process. But we have continued to organise National Women's Liberation conferences with plenary sessions because we have found no other way either of reaffirming to ourselves that we are part of a thriving and developing nation-wide movement or of agreeing to anything as a movement.

The women's movement produces no documents, no books, no publications, with which to present itself publicly. *Spare Rib* is produced, very competently, by the *Spare Rib* collective. The recently published Equality Report was produced by the NCCL. Individual women write on all kinds of subjects which are useful and important and feed back into the women's movement as well as introducing feminist ideas to those outside it. But we still have nothing which can be identified as our movement's expression of its analysis of society, and its political imperatives at this point in its history—which we could contradict the press with when they misrepresent us—and which could provide a basis for an effective channel of communication with the socialist movement.

The subordination of women is apparent at every level of social existence, often through women's absence. The enormous and creative diversity of feminist initiative—theatre groups, sexuality workshops, women's studies courses, groups such as the Women's Arts Alliance, Women in Manual Trades, and indeed feminists in the Communist Party—constitutes a response to the pervasiveness of our condition, the condition of women in a man's world. They express women's attempt to establish or reconstruct their relationship to every area of social, cultural, economic and political activity. They also should function, along with its more obvious campaigns, to enable the movement to continually reassess itself in relation to other social forces. But because of the diversity of fronts we are fighting on we have not created a way to accumulating and processing the results of these activities in a manner which enables us to use them to represent ourselves coherently to the world as a movement.

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Orlov and Détente

Giuliano Procacci

(The following article on some of the implications of the verdict passed by a Soviet court on Dr. Yury Orlov was published in l'Unità, *the Italian Communist Party's newspaper, on May 24. The author is a historian and member of the board of the Gramsci Institute. The translation is by Roy Armstrong.)*

I certainly believe that there may be many Italian democrats and communists who are disturbed and indignant as a result of the recent sentence of a Moscow court condemning Yury Orlov and other Soviet dissidents to extremely severe penalties. We are faced here with a very serious act—an act which appears unjustifiable from more than one standpoint: the haste with which the court proceedings were conducted; the way in which they were conducted (the friends and well-wishers of the defendants were not admitted to the court room, whereas persons hostile to them were admitted), and finally the disproportionately heavy penalty (seven years' hard labour and five years' internal exile for Orlov) in relation to the crime, supposing that there was a crime. Orlov was in fact accused of having helped to form a group which set itself the aim of checking on the way in which the Soviet government was observing the Helsinki accords. On the other hand, another of the accused was convicted for condemning the abuse of psychiatric methods in dealing with dissidents. Yet another was convicted for having tried to organise an autonomous trade union.

It should also be added that even if the Orlov case has certain specific and new features, it is not the first time that news of this kind has reached us from the Soviet Union in recent years. This confirms the general impression that it is not a question of isolated episodes but of a determined and precise conception of the relationship between authority and the citizens. Confronted with events of this kind, our newspaper has not failed in the past to express promptly and clearly its own dissent and its own condemnation and it is therefore natural that on this occasion, too, it has resolutely reaffirmed its position. The succession of episodes of this type, however, poses in my opinion other questions and problems which extend beyond the juridical and legal aspects of the matter and call for careful thought and for a judgement on our part. Problems and questions of a political nature.

Détente

The Orlov case has in fact happened at a particularly delicate juncture in the development of international affairs. It has happened at a time when the process of détente is, for the time being, slowing down and showing signs of crumbling and cracking —when in the Horn of Africa events are taking place in which socialist states are politically and militarily involved and when the rulers of one great power do not miss an opportunity to express their conviction that a third world conflict between the two super-powers is sooner or later inevitable. The question which poses itself at this point is therefore the following: What can *this* court verdict represent in *this* international context. What effects and repercussions may it have, setting aside the declared intentions? And more particularly and more specifically: does it promote the advance of the process of détente, in which we all have an interest, or does it rather hold it back? It is true that it is a question of one episode, but in the world of today episodes do not occur in isolation, without exercising, to a greater or lesser extent, an influence on the general course of events.

I believe everyone will realise that the concepts of détente and peaceful co-existence are not propagandist slogans but actual concepts. As such they are not words with only one meaning, fixed once and for all. It follows from this that their application and realisation is all the more complex and complicated. The most important variable is the assessment which from time to time may be made, and is indeed made, of the state of the relations of force between the various blocs or "camps", and between the political forces which, within each of them, function in favour of détente and peace or in the opposite direction. There can therefore exist—and there have in fact existed and do exist—various interpretations and doctrines of the concept of peaceful co-existence and of the practice of détente, according to the different assessments and the different analyses.

They range from a conception, predominantly or exclusively diplomatic-military, of co-existence as a temporary equilibrium between opposing blocs, to a conception of co-existence as a long-term confrontation between different social systems which, even in their diversity and their emulation, are interested in pursuing general common aims and are therefore prepared to put their relations on the plane of a confrontation in the spheres of politics and ideas. These are difficult problems which we discussed during a seminar on problems of Soviet history held in January at the Frattocchie on the

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initiative of the Gramsci Institute, the proceedings of which will be published shortly. But we must certainly have further discussions on them.

Battle of Ideas

The Orlov case, however, does give rise to certain ideas here and now. In 1956, speaking at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Anastas Mikoyan said, among other things, that "in mankind's consciousness socialism is today incomparably stronger than capitalism" and from this he drew the conclusion that "we are not afraid of the struggle *in the field of ideas* between socialism and capitalism". The context in which he said this leaves no doubt that in talking about the struggle in the field of ideas he was referring to what we are accustomed to call the confrontation and battle of ideas and this is also confirmed by the fact that some of the decisions taken following the 20th Congress, also in the spheres of human rights and the circulation of ideas, were moves in that direction. When Mikoyan made that statement Europe was still in the grip of the logic of the cold war; the liberation movement of the peoples of the Third World was taking its first steps and public opinion in the United States was firmly dominated by anti-Sovietism.

New Situation

Now, more than 20 years later, things have changed in the world, in Europe and also in American public opinion following the experiences of Vietnam and Watergate. Certainly there still exist in the world and in individual states powerful groups and forces which are endeavouring to drive the system of international relations backwards, taking it back to the times and to the atmosphere of the cold war, groups and forces for which the Soviet Union constitutes the greatest obstacle and anti-Sovietism remains the favourite weapon. Experience, and in particular the experience of Vietnam, has shown, however, that these forces and these groups can be isolated and that their schemes can be frustrated if one succeeds in using a lever based on the great force of world public opinion and on the great potential for democracy and peace which is contained in it and which it is able to bring into play. The Soviet Union has rightly appealed to this world public opinion in the past, when it has been a case of defending the causes of persecuted individuals or political or social groups, or oppressed peoples, and world public opinion has not failed to respond to those calls. This, however, can take place (and does take place) only within the framework of a broader, more courageous and more dynamic conception and practice of the policy of détente and co-existence; a conception that is not curtailed and confined merely to the diplomatic-military aspects, but is extended to confrontation in the fields of politics and ideas; a conception in which different forces, currents and experiences can recognise one another and collaborate, in complete autonomy. Because of this it is necessary that the values of democracy and the rights of man and of the citizen should be upheld and strengthened everywhere, that the treaties which confirm them should be respected and that artificial barriers should not be created in order to stop or hinder the circulation of ideas.

Internal and Foreign Policy

The objection may be raised against this that what is involved here are noble but abstract ideas. In this connection it can, however, be pointed out that the image which a country presents to the world of its own social and political organisation constitutes an important factor, and perhaps a decisive one, not only in its international prestige but also in its own ability to influence world affairs. In the world of today there does not exist any act of internal policy which may not be, directly or indirectly, an act of foreign policy. This is true of any state whatsoever. As regards the Soviet Union in particular, it can be noted that the moments when its prestige and its influence were greater were precisely those when it succeeded in projecting into the world an image of its internal political and social organisation which was richer, more articulated and more free. This happened, for instance, in the preparatory phase of the 1936 Constitution and, above all, with the 20th Congress.

On the other hand, at no time in its history was its prestige and its actual influence so low (and this includes the political and military spheres) and so reduced as in the years of the Stalin trials and purges. The Moscow verdict against Orlov certainly does not help to improve the present image of the Soviet Union as seen by world public opinion. For the reasons which I have endeavoured to explain, I believe that it does not contribute to the cause of détente either.

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